Book of Praise

ANGLO-GENEVAN PSALTER

Authorized Provisional Version

PREMIER PRINTING LTD.
Winnipeg, Manitoba
The *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* has an important function within the worship services of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The word “praise” in the title reminds us of the exhortation in the letter to the Hebrews: “… let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name” (13:15). Because of his grace and faithfulness, the LORD meets with the people of his covenant in the worship service. In response to his Word we offer up our sacrifices of praise in psalms and hymns. The creeds and confessions are also the fruit of lips that acknowledge God’s name.

Our *Book of Praise* can be divided into four main parts, each of which serves as a reminder of our Reformed heritage: the Psalms and hymns, our doctrinal standards, the liturgical forms and prayers, and the Church Order and subscription forms.

Reformed churches have always attached great value to the Psalter as a collection of songs of God’s covenant. John Calvin wrote the following about congregational singing in his preface to the Geneva Psalter, 1543:

As for public prayers, there are two kinds: the one consists simply of speech, the other of song…. And indeed, we know from experience that singing has great strength and power to move and to set on fire the hearts of men in order that they may call upon God and praise him with a more vehement and more ardent zeal. It is to be remembered always that this singing should not be light or frivolous, but that it ought to have weight and majesty, ... Now, what Augustine says is true, namely that no one can sing anything worthy of God which he has not received from him. Therefore, even after we have carefully searched everywhere, we shall not find better or more appropriate songs to this end than the Psalms of David, inspired by the Holy Spirit. And for this reason, when we sing them, we are assured that God puts the words in our mouth, as if he himself were singing through us to exalt his glory....

The first complete Genevan Psalter was published in 1562. Four years later the Genevan tunes were used by Petrus Dathenus in his Dutch versification of the Psalms. The Genevan Psalter has been associated with the churches of the Reformation ever since. When members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) came to North America after the Second World War and established the Canadian Reformed Churches, they brought with them their appreciation for the Genevan Psalter. As early as 1954, the first General Synod of our churches appointed a committee to study the possibility of producing such a Psalter in the English language. In 1972 the first complete *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* appeared, and English metrical versions of all the Psalms could be sung for the first time to the authentic Genevan melodies of the sixteenth century. The present text is the result of a thorough revision of this Psalter as it was initiated by General Synod 2007 and completed for approval by General Synod 2010.

Although in Reformed liturgy the Psalms have a predominant place, our churches have not excluded the use of scriptural hymns. They, too, constitute a thank offering of praise when we sing of the facts of redemption by God in Jesus Christ our Lord.
The doctrinal standards of our churches are included next. The ecclesiastical documents of the Dutch Reformed Churches were first translated into English by churches composed of English and Scottish refugees in the Netherlands. These translations were used in only slightly revised form by the Reformed Church in America and, later, also by the Christian Reformed Church. Whereas the Canadian Reformed Churches first made grateful use of these older translations, here the creeds and confessions are presented in contemporary English.

The liturgical forms and prayers make up the third main division. The forms for the administration of infant baptism and of the Lord’s supper as well as the form for the solemnization of marriage first appeared in the Dutch Psalter of Petrus Dathenus (1566). The forms for the administration of church discipline, the ordination of ministers, and the ordination of elders and deacons were added by the Synod of The Hague in 1586, and the form for the administration of adult baptism by the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. Whereas the Canadian Reformed Churches first used the version published in 1767 by the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of New York, the liturgical forms are published here in current English along with forms adopted more recently. The collection of prayers which follows the forms also dates from Reformation times; it, too, had its place in the Psalter of Dathenus. The English text of these prayers has been modernized. Although their use is not obligatory, they can be of great value in public and private worship.

The Church Order could be considered an appendix to the Book of Praise. This document dates back to the first synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, held in Emden in 1571, and was subsequently revised by the Synod of Dort, 1618-19. It appears here in the revised form adopted by General Synod Cloverdale, 1983, and amended by subsequent synods. As well, two subscription forms, adopted by General Synod Smithers, 2007, are included. At the very early synods, the brothers put their signatures under the confessions to signify their agreement with them. The Form of Subscription was adopted by the Synod of Dort. The forms as they appear here are translations and adaptations of the original Dort Form of Subscription.

We are thankful that the Book of Praise continues to be a blessing to the church of Christ. Above all, may our God be “enthroned on the praises of Israel” (Psalm 22:3) also through the use of this book. To him alone be all glory, now and forever.

The Standing Committee for the
Publication of the Book of Praise
of the Canadian Reformed Churches
NOTES ON THE GENEVAN TUNES

1. The tunes of the Psalms can be divided roughly into three groups:
   (a) the tunes of the 50 Psalms in the Geneva edition of 1551, for which Clé-
   ment Marot provided the text. Louis Bourgeois is usually considered to be the
   composer, but there is as yet no certainty on this point.
   (b) the tunes of the 34 Psalms for which Théodore de Bèze (Beza) provided the
   text and which also appeared in 1551. Although the details are not yet clear, it
   is assumed that Bourgeois composed or edited these tunes as well.
   (c) the 40 remaining tunes, which appeared in the completed edition of 1562.
   They are usually ascribed to a certain Maistre Pierre, but it has not yet been es-
   tablished whether he composed or merely copied them; his identity also remains
   a mystery.

2. Since 124 tunes are used for the 150 Psalms, some of them are repeated; 15 tunes
   occur twice, 4 occur three times, and 1 occurs four times. The repeated tunes oc-
   cur in the following combinations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalms</th>
<th>5, 64</th>
<th>14, 53</th>
<th>17, 63, 70</th>
<th>18, 144</th>
<th>24, 62, 95, 111</th>
<th>28, 109</th>
<th>30, 76, 139</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31, 71</td>
<td>33, 67</td>
<td>36, 68</td>
<td>46, 82</td>
<td>51, 69</td>
<td>60, 108</td>
<td>65, 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66, 98, 118</td>
<td>74, 116</td>
<td>77, 86</td>
<td>78, 90</td>
<td>100, 131, 142</td>
<td>117, 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in the original Genevan Psalter, Psalm 140 and the Ten Commandments (Hymn
11) also have the same tune. Additional Genevan melodies are found in the Song
of Mary (Hymn 17) and the Song of Simeon (Hymn 22).

Furthermore, in this edition nine of the Genevan Psalm tunes are used for other
Hymns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>Hymn</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>(not including coda)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66, 98, 118</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3, 35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>134</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In the Genevan Psalter nine different modes are represented.
   Dorian: Psalms 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 20, 24, 33, 34, 37, 41, 45, 48, 50,
   53, 59, 62, 64, 67, 78, 80, 88, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 104, 107, 111, 112, 114,
   115, 125, 128, 130, 137, 143, 146, 148, 149
   Hypodorian: Psalms 7, 23, 28, 40, 61, 77, 86, 109, 120, 129
   Phrygian: Psalms 17, 26, 31, 51, 63, 69, 70, 71, 83, 94, 100, 102, 131, 132,
   141, 142, 147
   Mixolydian: Psalms 15, 19, 27, 46, 57, 74, 82, 85, 116, 126, 136, 145
   Hypomixolydian: Psalms 30, 44, 58, 76, 87, 93, 103, 113, 117, 121, 127, 139
Aeolian: Psalms 4, 6, 22, 38, 65, 72
Hypoaeolian: Psalms 16, 18, 39, 55, 106, 110, 144; The Song of Mary (Hymn 17)
Ionian: Psalms 1, 3, 21, 29, 32, 36, 47, 52, 68, 73, 75, 81, 84, 97, 105, 122, 133, 135, 138, 150

4. As for the musical notation of the Psalms in this edition of the Book of Praise, permission was received from the Interkerkelijke Stichting voor het Kerklied to follow the example of the Liedboek voor de Kerken (The Hague, Boekencentrum, 1973).

5. Musical notation prior to 1650 generally does not include bar lines or time signatures. Instead, tunes have a tactus sign that indicates time is to be measured by a down-and-up movement of the hand.

The Book of Praise retains the tactus sign in its musical notation for the psalm and some hymn melodies: the tactus major (½) the psalms, and the tactus minor (¼) or tactus proportionatus (¼) for some hymns. In the tactus major, the half (or open) note forms the unit of measure for the up and down motion (½); in the tactus minor, the quarter (or solid) note forms the unit of measure (¼); and in the tactus proportionatus, the up and down motions differ in duration.

It is generally assumed that in the sixteenth century the half note of the tactus had a duration equivalent to the pulse of an average person (about MM=80).
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PSALMS
Book I
Psalms 1-41

PSALM 1

1. How blest is he who shuns the path of sin,
who spurns the counsel of unrighteous men
and will not stand or sit among the scoffers;
their company to him no pleasure offers.
But his delight is in God’s holy law;
all day and night he ponders it with awe.

2. Whoever loves God’s law with all his heart
and will not from the way of truth depart
is like a tree which, planted by a river,
stays lush and green with leaves that will not wither
and which in season yields abundant fruit.
So he will thrive, whatever his pursuit.

3. Not so the wicked! For like chaff are they –
mere chaff that gusts of wind will blow away.
When judgment comes, they’ll stand condemned and humbled,
cast out from where the righteous are assembled.
The LORD will guard the pathway of the just;
the way of sinners leads to death and dust.
1. Why do the restless nations madly rage?
   What haughty schemes are they in vain contriving?
   The kings and rulers of the earth engage in rash attempts to plot their empty striving.
   They stand prepared, they all conspire together against the Lord and his anointed King.
   “Let us,” they say, “tear loose and break their fetters, cast off their chains, their shackles from us fling.”

2. Though proudly now they raise their battle cry, how vain is all their frenzied opposition!
The Lord, who sits enthroned in heaven on high, laughs them to scorn: he holds them in derision.
Then he will speak in wrath and indignation and all their host will he with terror fill:
“T’ve set my King,” so runs his proclamation, “upon Mount Zion, on my holy hill.”
3. O peoples, listen to the Lord’s decree. I will make known his royal declaration: “Your Father I become this very day; you are my Son. To you I give the nations. Ask what you will: your heritage I’ll make them; their lands you will possess, both near and far, for with a rod of iron you shall break them, dash them to pieces like a potter’s jar.”

4. Take heed, O rulers of the earth, and hear. Be wise, O kings, and let his edict warn you. Rejoice with trembling; serve the Lord with fear. Now kiss the Son, lest he in fury scorn you, lest in his wrath the Lord cause you to perish, for quickly kindled is his anger’s blaze. But all who trust in him the Lord will cherish; he will defend and bless them all their days.
1. How countless are my foes!

   How many, LORD, are those

   now rising to accuse me!

   All point at me and shout,

   “God will not help him out!”

   They with their taunts abuse me.

   But you, O LORD, will be

   a shield to cover me

   when I am faint and weary,

   for when you hear me sigh,

   you lift my head up high;

   you are my power and glory.
2. I cry to God, and he
from Zion answers me;
I will not be forsaken.
In him I put my trust:
I go to sleep and rest
until at dawn I waken.
By thousands I’m beset,
but God will not forget
to be my strength and tower.
Though foes in fierce array
encircle me as prey,
I do not fear their power.

3. Arise, O God of might,
and put my foes to flight.
Let all their host be scattered!
For you uphold my cause:
you strike them on their jaws
and leave their teeth all shattered.
The LORD will ever be
the one who sets us free
when enemies oppress us.
O God in whom we trust,
in you shall we find rest.
May you forever bless us.
1. O righteous God of my salvation,
be merciful and hear my plea!

In times of trouble or oppression
you sent me help and consolation.

Be gracious now and answer me!

How long, O men, will you bring sorrow
and turn my honour into shame?

How long yet will you love and follow
lies and delusions, vain and hollow?

How long will you revile my name?

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

Geneva, 1542/1551
2. Know that the Lord in his good pleasure has set the righteous ones apart: he claims them as his own, his treasure. In mercy great beyond all measure, he takes my misery to heart. Do not let wrath breed sin and violence. Restrain your anger and be still; lie down to meditate in silence. Place in the Lord your sole reliance. Bring him right offerings. Do his will.

3. So many sigh, “O who will ever show any good to us again?” O Lord whose mercy fails us never, bestow on us your love and favour, and cause your face on us to shine. More joy and gladness you have sent me than all the joy of those who feast on grain and wine in days of plenty. Lord, in the safety that you grant me, I sleep in peace, from cares released.
1. O hear my words of lamentation; 
   Lord, pay attention to my sighs. 
   My God and King, regard my cries. 
   To you I turn in meditation. 
   Grant consolation!

2. At sunrise hear my supplication; 
   O Lord, I seek your help and grace. 
   At break of day I plead my case 
   and wait in eager expectation 
   for vindication.

3. O Lord, you are a God who never 
   in any evil takes delight. 
   The proud you banish from your sight, 
   and every liar and deceiver 
   you doom forever.

4. When led into your habitation 
   through your abundant love and grace, 
   I will bow down before your face 
   and plead in awe-filled adoration 
   for preservation.
5.  Uphold me, LORD! With aid provide me;  
my enemies are numberless.  
Lead me in paths of righteousness.  
Make straight your way and safely guide me;  
LORD, walk beside me.

6.  Untruthful are the words they utter;  
you in their hearts my ruin crave.  
Their throats are like an open grave;  
they carry on deceitful chatter  
with tongues that flatter.

7.  LORD, make them pay for their transgression;  
through their own plotting, let them fall.  
Their many sinful deeds recall;  
drive them, O God, to their perdition.  
Hear my petition.

8.  Let those for help on you depending,  
who seek the shelter of your wings,  
their songs of jubilation sing.  
LORD, let the praise to you ascending  
be never-ending.

9.  O LORD, with your protection cover  
all those who love your holy name,  
that they with joy may spread your fame.  
You bless the just and with your favour  
shield them forever.
1. Re-buke me, LORD, no long-er,
nor chas-ten me in an-ger.
In mer-cy hear my groans;
O LORD, see how I lan-guish
and heal my bit-ter an-guish,
for trou-bled are my bones.

2. My soul is troubled greatly.
O quick-ly come to aid me!
Why do you tarry, LORD?
Turn back and show your favour;
me in your love de-liver,
according to your word.

3. How can the dead adore you
or bring their thanks be-fore you,
or praise your holy name?
I’m weary with my moaning,
worn out with con-stant groaning
and over-come with shame.
4. All night, instead of sleeping, I drench my couch with weeping. With grief my eyes grow weak since foes with hate surround me and without ceasing hound me; my ruin they all seek.

5. Depart from me, transgressors! Away, all you oppressors! God has inclined his ear and heard my supplication, my plea for consolation. The LORD with help is near.

6. He heard me when I pleaded; my prayers the LORD has heeded. My foes will be ashamed, for sudden fear will shake them, and panic overtake them. Their doom has he proclaimed.
2. Rise in your wrath, O God of glory, 
against my foes and all their fury. 
My God, awake! Let them draw near, 
that they before you may appear. 
Ascend your throne to judge the nations; 
with justice rule their generations. 
Judge me, O LORD, for I profess 
integrity and righteousness.
3. Let all the evildoers perish. 
The just, O LORD, support and cherish. 
Let them in you their refuge find – in you, who search both heart and mind. 
God is my shield, my strong defender, and he will righteous judgments render. 
As upright judge, he every day will to my foes his wrath display.

4. God’s anger will be unrelenting if one does wrong without repenting. 
Then he his righteous wrath will show; he’ll whet his sword and bend his bow, with skill at the offender aiming his deadly arrows, barbed and flaming. 
My foe great evil has conceived but will not see his goals achieved.

5. With evil pregnant, he’ll engender a wicked brood of lies and slander. 
But when for me he digs a pit, he will himself fall into it. 
The mischief that he is intending will on his own head be descending. 
God’s justice I will glorify, and I will praise the LORD Most High!
1. O LORD, our Lord, yours be all ad-o-ra-tion.

How glo-rious is your name in all cre-a-tion!

You have dis-played your maj-es-ty on high;

your glo-ry reach-es far a-bove the sky.

2. From children’s lips you let your praise be sounded, and on this praise a fortress you have founded: our little ones your strength and glory show; through them you silence the avenging foe.

3. LORD, when my gaze upon the heavens lingers, on moon and stars, the work of your own fingers, O what is man that you should think of him, the son of man that you should care for him?

4. You little lower than divine have made him and so with glorious honour have arrayed him. All things you gave to him as his domain, that over your creation he might reign.

5. You have appointed him as lord and master of bird and beast in forest, field, and pasture; of all the fish and creatures of the sea. O LORD, how great is your name’s majesty!
1. O LORD, my thankful voice I raise; with all my heart I sing your praise and of your wonders tell the story. O God Most High, in you I glory.

2. See how my enemies retreat; they stumble, perish in defeat. LORD, for my cause have you contended and from your throne my right defended.

3. The nations’ pride have you made void; my wicked foes have you destroyed, their name wiped out, their memory banished. Their cities, rooted out, have vanished.

4. Forever reigns the LORD alone; for judgment he set up his throne. The world he judges in uprightness; his truth and equity delight us.

5. God is a stronghold firm and sure for all who grief and woe endure. Those seeking him are not forsaken; those trusting him will not be shaken.
Psalm 9

7. Have pity, LORD, my suffering see,
you who from death’s gate rescue me,
that I, O God, your praises voicing,
in Zion’s gates may find rejoicing.

8. My foes fell in the pit they made,
their feet caught in the snares they laid.
By their own guile their power is broken;
the LORD is just, and he has spoken.

9. The wicked to Sheol return –
all those who the Almighty spurn.
As for the poor and the afflicted,
they will not always be neglected.

10. LORD, let not human strength prevail.
Summon the nations, judge them all.
Strike them with terror, let them tremble.
Show them they’re mortal, make them humble.
1. Why do you stand far off? O LORD, arise!

Why do you hide yourself in troubled days?

Do you not hear it when the poor man cries?

For on the poor the wicked sinner preys;

with arrogance his heart is set ablaze.

Let him be caught in schemes of his own making

with all who of his evil are partaking.

2. The wicked man boasts of his heart’s desire,
gives greed his blessing, for the LORD he spurns.
In haughty pride the wicked scorns his ire;
there is no room for God in his concerns.
In all his thoughts, to him he never turns.
God’s holy laws do not restrain or curb him.
He prospers, and his foes dare not disturb him.
4. He sits in ambush watching for his prey
and murders those not of his wiles aware.
He searches out the helpless on their way.
He is a lion lurking in his lair.
He lies in wait to catch them in his snare.
Deep in his heart he thinks, “God does not see it;
why fear his wrath? There is no need to flee it.”
5. Arise, O LORD! Lift up your mighty hand. Do not forget the poor. O God, be near! The humble in their helplessness defend! Why does the wicked man still scoff and sneer? How can he keep on thinking without fear, “God will ignore my evil and oppression; he will not make me pay for my transgression”?

6. But you, O God, you do see grief and woes, and you do take the victims’ cause in hand. To you they flee, for you support all those who on their own cannot their foes withstand. You to the fatherless your help extend. LORD, break the arm of all who evil cherish; seek out their wickedness until they perish.

7. The LORD is King; he reigns for evermore. The heathen soon shall vanish from his land. O LORD, you hear the pleading of the poor and you support them with your mighty hand; the orphaned and afflicted you defend, that earthborn man, aroused by hate and error, no more may strike the land with fear and terror.
The LORD is on his throne in heaven’s palace. He sees the sons of Adam from that height;
his eyes inspect their virtues and their malice.
God hates those who in violence delight;
he sends them storms and brimstone fiercely burning.
The LORD is righteous. All who are upright
shall see his face and fill their deepest yearning.
1. Help us, O LORD! The god-ly all have van-ished;
gone are the faith-ful who your judg-ments seek.
Men lie to one an-oth-er, truth is ban-ished;
with flat-ter-ing lips and dou-ble heart they speak.

2. O may the LORD cut off the lips that flatter,
and those who say, “Our tongue makes us succeed!”
Hear how in vanity they proudly chatter,
“Our lips are ours – what master do we need?”

3. “Because they all oppress the weak and needy,
I will arise and right my people’s wrong;
I hear their groans and will destroy the greedy,
and grant my own the rest for which they long.”

4. The words of promise which the LORD has spoken
are purest silver seven times refined.
His covenant stands from age to age unbroken;
he is our God, in truth and faith enshrined.

5. O LORD, protect us from this generation;
forever save us from their ways of sin.
They strut about, and vileness in the nation
is highly praised among the sons of men.
1. How long will you forget me, LORD? How long must sorrow be endured? You hide your face while here I languish. Foes with their taunts increase my anguish. Will I forever be ignored?

2. O LORD my God, see my despair! Keep me from death. LORD, hear my prayer and to my eyes restore their lustre. Save me from downfall and disaster, lest foes in triumph gloat and stare.

3. Though I was troubled and depressed, in your unfailing love I trust; my heart exults in your salvation. You, LORD, I praise with jubilation, for in your goodness I find rest.
2. The LORD looks down from heaven’s holy throne to see if anyone has understanding. Not one seeks God, but wickedness intending, the sons of men, to sin and evil prone, his law disown.

3. Will evil doers never understand? As they would eat their bread, they are devouring my helpless people. God they are ignoring; they do not pray, but evil they have planned throughout the land.

4. See how they tremble, how they cringe with fear, for God is with the just in love unbounded. They wish to see the poor man’s hope confounded, but when he cries, however loud they jeer, the LORD shall hear.

5. O Israel, you people of God’s choice, that out of Zion might come your salvation! When God restores the fortunes of his nation, let Jacob sing and Israel rejoice with happy voice.
2. He who keeps slander from his tongue, who does no wrong to all those near him, nor will on them discredit bring; who scorns the vile, while honouring those who obey the Lord and fear him.

3. He who keeps oaths at any cost, who seeks no interest for his lending, nor takes a bribe to harm the just. He’ll stand unshaken, richly blest with grace and favour never-ending.
2. All those who choose to serve another god increase the sorrows that they bring upon them. I will not pour their offerings of blood or speak their idols’ names: my lips will shun them. But you, O LORD, I shall forsake you never: my cup and portion you will be forever.

3. You will maintain my happy lot, O LORD; the lines have fallen in most pleasant places. The heritage that you to me award is my delight, a gift that I hold precious. Your measuring-rod has blessed me with your favour, marked out a place to be enjoyed forever.
Psalm 16

4. I praise the Lord and bless him all the day,
   for with his care and counsel he provides me;
even at night my heart shows me the way.

The Lord is near and he in safety guides me.

I worship him in joyful adoration;
none can deprive me of his preservation.

5. Therefore I will rejoice with heart and soul;
   my body rests secure in your protection.
   You will not leave me down in dark Sheol,
nor let your Holy One there see corruption.
   Your presence gives me joy in fullest measures;
your right hand brings me everlasting pleasures.
2. Though in the night you probe my mind
and test my inner thoughts and feelings,
al that my heart may be concealing,
you will in me no evil find.
My mouth does not commit transgression.
As for the works of wicked men,
your word has kept me far from sin,
from ways of violent oppression.

PSALM 17
A prayer of David.

1. LORD, hear me plead a right-eous cause;
with blame-less lips I come be-fore you
and with my bit-ter cries im-plore you
to res-cue one who loves your laws.

Lord, si-lence ev-ery ac-cus-a-tion
of those who in my harm de-light
and fix your eyes on what is right.
To you I look for vin-di-ca-tion.

Geneva, 1551
Psalm 17

3. Your paths I took to travel by,
and never did I slip or waver.
I call on you, I seek your favour,
for you will answer from on high.
O Shield of those on you depending,
display the wonders of your love.

LORD, hear my prayer from heaven above
and show your mercy never-ending.

4. LORD, as the apple of your eye
protect me, with your care provide me.
Beneath your wings, O Saviour, hide me:
my deadly foes in ambush lie.
They close their hearts to all compassion
and utter boastful vanity.
They track me down, surrounding me
to make me yield to their oppression.
5. They like a lion crave their prey.  
Rise up, O LORD, rise up to show them  
the sword you draw to overthrow them  
and with your hand snatch me away.  
Save me from those whose only pleasure  
is this life’s portion, nothing more.  
O gorge them with the wealth they store  
and let their offspring share such treasure.

6. But I, when I awake, shall see  
your face in righteousness and glory.  
LORD, with your likeness then before me,  
how rich and full my joy shall be.
2. The cords of death were tightly coiled around me; the torrents of destruction nearly drowned me. I lay in death’s entangling cords ensnared; the grave confronted me and I despaired. I called on God, the LORD my God, to save me; in my distress his mighty help he gave me. He from his heavenly temple heard my cry; it reached his ears: he answered from on high.
3. The earth then reeled, its pillars rocked and quavered; the deep foundations of the mountains wavered. They trembled when they saw God’s wrath awake; his blazing anger made them heave and quake. Smoke rose up from his nostrils, black and frightening, and from his mouth flashed scorching fire and lightning. He tore the heavens in his anger’s heat, while clouds of darkness swirled around his feet.

4. On cherubim he rode, so bright and splendid; on wings of wind he soared and he descended. With darkness covered was his majesty; clouds dark with water were his canopy. Out of the brightness that advanced before him hailstones and fire broke through the clouds that bore him. His rolling thunder echoed through the sky, the mighty roaring voice of God Most High.

5. As earth looked on in fearful awe and wonder, great bolts of lightning split the skies asunder. He shot his arrows, routed all his foes; none dared the fury of his wrath oppose. The ocean’s deep, the bedrock of creation, you, LORD, laid bare, exposing earth’s foundation; all trembled at your might and stood aghast at your rebuke, your nostrils’ angry blast.

6. From heaven reaching down with his protection, he pulled me from the waters of destruction. He saved me from my fiercest enemy, from those who hate me, foes too strong for me. In my calamity the LORD was gracious and brought me to a place serene and spacious. He came to rescue me and set me free, for he, the LORD, showed his delight in me.
To all those just and faithful in their dealings, you, LORD, are just, your faithfulness revealing. Those who are pure and innocent will see your innocence and perfect purity. The shrewd and cunning you outdo in cunning as you expose the evil they are planning. You save the humble, for you hear their cries, but you bring low those who have haughty eyes.
9. The dark around me into brightness turning,
   you light my lamp, O LORD, and keep it burning.
   With you I face a troop and crush them all,
   and with my God I scale the highest wall.
   How perfect is his way, how all-excelling!
   His word has proven flawless, never failing.
   He is for those who in him refuge take
   a mighty shield, a fortress none can shake.

10. Who but the LORD is God, so great in splendour?
    Who is a rock but God, my strong defender?
    He with his strength has armed and girded me;
    my way he has prepared most perfectly.
    With him as guide, I will not fall or stumble;
    he makes my feet like deer’s feet, swift and nimble;
    he lets me stand secure on mountain heights.
    There I am safe, supported by his might.

11. O LORD, you for the day of battle train me,
    and with your help you strengthen and sustain me.
    My arms can even bend the strongest bow;
    all who attack me I will overthrow.
    You granted me the shield of your salvation,
    and your right hand upheld my place and station.
    Your gentle care has made me strong and great.
    I did not slip: my path is broad and straight.

12. I chased my enemies and overthrew them;
    I did not stop until I could subdue them.
    You gave me strength and armed me for the fight;
    you made my foes all turn their backs in flight.
    None heard their cries, their pleas for preservation;
    I pounded them in their humiliation
    fine as the windblown dust before my feet;
    I cast them out like refuse of the street.
13. You saved me when beleaguered by the nations;
you made me ruler of their populations,
and foreign people, once to me unknown,
now honour me and cringe before my throne.

When they but heard of me, they all obeyed me,
for you with radiant glory have arrayed me.
They left their strongholds, overcome with fear;
all trembled as before me they drew near.

14. The LORD, he lives! Praised be my rock forever!
Exalted be my faithful God, my Saviour.
He gives me vengeance, justice he pursues;
he hostile nations under me subdues.
O LORD, you honoured me when foes disgraced me;
you far above my adversaries placed me.
You freed your servant from the tyrant’s might;
the fierce and lawless you have put to flight.
15. I will extol you, LORD, among the nations for all your wondrous works of vindication. Your perfect righteousness I will proclaim by singing praises to your holy name. Time after time God makes his king victorious, grants his anointed triumphs great and glorious. To David and his offspring he extends the loving faithfulness that never ends.
The spacious heavens declare
God's glory everywhere;
the skies proclaim his might.

The knowledge they display
day echoes forth to day
and night makes known to night.

They use no speech or word,
yet everywhere is heard
the voice of all creation.

The truth that it expounds
throughout the world resounds
and reaches every nation.
2. God in the firmament
pitched for the sun a tent,
the canopy of night.
It’s like a joyful groom
who from his bridal room
leaps forth with great delight.
Like one who runs a race
with strong and eager pace,
it speeds across the heavens;
the sun its path completes,
and from its piercing heat
not anything is hidden.

3. God’s law is sound and whole;
it will revive the soul,
for it new strength supplies.
His testimony sure,
trustworthy evermore,
will make the simple wise.
His precepts plainly show
how right they are, and so
the heart they cheer and brighten.
The LORD’s commandments pure
shine forth with radiance clear
and so the eyes enlighten.

4. The fear of God is clean
and, free from sin and stain,
forever will endure.
His judgments all express
unfailing righteousness;
the LORD’s decrees are sure.
They far exceed in worth
the finest gold on earth:
his precious testimony!
They even sweeter are
than all that’s sweet and pure
in combs that drip with honey.
"Psalm 19"

5. Your servant, who has heard
the warnings of your word,
to them pays heed, O LORD.

Those walking in your way,
who your commands obey,
will reap a great reward.

But, LORD, who can perceive
what errors one may have
unwittingly committed?

O cleanse me! Let me be
of secret failings free,
of hidden faults acquitted."
6. O LORD, from wilful ways preserve me all my days: the rule of sin prevent. Then I shall blameless be, from grave offences free, and wholly innocent. LORD, hear me as I pray: let what my tongue may say and what my heart may ponder be pleasing in your sight, Redeemer great in might, my Rock and my Defender.
1. O may the LORD in days of trouble
   from Zion hear your plea.
   With his support may you be able
to gain the victory.
   May Jacob’s God remember ever
   your offerings of spices
   and from his dwelling look in favour
   on all your sacrifices.

2. May all your heart’s desire be granted;
   may God fulfil your plans.
   May we with shouts of joy unstinted
   your victory enhance.
   Then shall we praise the LORD so glorious,
   his holy name professing,
   and let our banners fly victorious.
   God crown your prayers with blessing.
3. I know now that the LORD’s anointed will with his help be blest. He hears the one he has appointed and grants him his request. Yes, from his heaven high and holy his right hand strong and mighty shall curb the proud, exalt the lowly, and with great deeds delight me.

4. Some boast of chariots, some of horses, but we boast in the name of him who rules all heaven’s forces, our God so great in fame. They will collapse and fall before us, but we shall rise undaunted. LORD, save the king, make him victorious, that so our prayers be granted.
1. **LORD, in your strength the king exults.**

Your power great and glorious,

has made his reign victorious.

How he delights in such results!

Him you have richly blest

by granting his request.

2. **No favour you from him withhold;**

with blessings you surround him.

With glory you have crowned him –

yes, with a crown of purest gold.

He asked for life, and see:

you gave it endlessly.

3. **Great is his glorious majesty**

through triumphs that you granted.

To him you have presented

gifts that endure eternally.

Joy in your presence, LORD,

is his supreme reward.

4. **The king trusts in the LORD alone,**

who never will forsake him.

Nothing will ever shake him,

for God his love to him has shown.

He knows he can rely

on help from God Most High.
5. **O king, your enemies are doomed.**
   Your hand will overpower them,
   and fire will soon devour them,
   for, by God’s blazing wrath consumed,
   those who oppress the just
   will turn to ash and dust.

6. **Their offspring, too, you will destroy**
   and from among the nations
   blot out their generations.
   Whatever schemes they may employ,
   whatever evil deed,
   your foes will not succeed.

7. **When you, O king, your arrows aim,**
   those who for war assemble
   will flee in fear and stumble.
   **LORD, be exalted in the fame**
   of your victorious might.
   We praise it day and night.
2. Yet you, O Holy One, in glory dwell, enthroned upon the praise of Israel. 
   In you our fathers put their trust as well and were delivered. 
   For when they were by cares and woes afflicted, they trusted you and so were well protected. 
   To you they cried and they were not neglected or put to shame.
3. But I, I am a worm, and not a man. I am despised and scorned by everyone; those who my grief and misery have seen say as they mock me: “He trusts in God, relying on his favour; why does the LORD not help him as his Saviour? If God delights in him, let him deliver and rescue him.”

4. You drew me from the womb and gave me rest, for you, LORD, soothed me on my mother’s breast; right from my birth I have on you been cast, God my Defender. You ever since the day my mother bore me have been my God. In my distress assure me that you are not far off but will restore me; none else can help.

5. Fierce bulls, those that on Bashan’s heights abound, with dreadful might besiege me all around; they open wide their mouths at me and sound like roaring lions. Poured out like water, all my strength is going; my bones are out of joint. My fear is showing; my heart, like wax within my body flowing, all melts away.

6. Dried like a potsherd, all my strength is gone; my tongue sticks to my palate as I moan, and in the dust of death you lay me down. Dogs here surround me. I’m skin and bones, and gloating foes are staring; they’ve pierced my hands and feet, no cruelty sparing, and they divide the garments I was wearing by casting lots.
8. I to my brothers of your name will tell
and praise you in the midst of Israel.
All you who fear the LORD, praise him as well
in your assembly.
O Jacob’s offspring, honour and adore him.
He did not scorn the lowly or abhor him.
God did not keep his face concealed before him
but heard his cries.
9. I’ll sing my praises where God’s people meet and keep the vows that I will there repeat. Praise God, who gives the poor enough to eat. Rejoice forever! All nations will remember to revere him, and all their families will bow down and fear him. He issues his commands and all will hear him: the LORD is king.

10. All who are rich will fear his majesty; all who go down to dust will bow the knee – yes, all whose own strength cannot keep them free from death and ruin. Posterity through every generation will serve him and proclaim his vindication; those yet unborn will hear of the salvation that he has won.
1. The Lord's my shepherd. He in love defends me; I shall not want. In pastures green he tends me, makes me lie down, his care and mercy showing; leads me where peaceful streams are gently flowing.

He for his name's sake surely will restore me; in paths of righteousness he goes before me.

2. Though by its gloom and shadows overtaken, in death's dark valley I am not forsaken; I fear no evil: you are there beside me. Through all the depths of sorrow you will guide me. You comfort me, O God of my salvation; your rod and staff, they are my consolation.

3. Your bounteous table you prepare before me, and all my foes look on while you restore me. My head you have with soothing oil anointed; my cup runs over, for you have appointed goodness and mercy to forsake me never, and in your house, LORD, I will dwell forever.
1. The Lord is King of earth’s domain,
    the world and all that dwell there-in.
Rejoice, O Zion’s sons and daughters,
for it stands firm by his decrees;
he founded it upon the seas,
established it upon the waters.

2. Who shall ascend the hill of God,
    stand in his holy place, and laud
the Lord who lives and reigns forever?
He who withstands the wicked’s lure,
whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure,
who keeps his oaths and does not waver.

3. Rich blessings shall be his reward,
and vindication from the Lord,
who is the rock of his salvation.
Such are all those who seek his face.
O God of Jacob, God of grace,
from you is all their expectation.
5. Lift up your heads, you arch and gate;
O ancient doors, rise up and wait.
Let him come in, the King all-glorious.

Who is this King so great in fame?
The LORD Almighty is his name,
he who in battle is victorious.

4. Lift up your heads, you arch and gate;
O ancient doors, rise up and wait.
Let him come in, the King all-glorious.

Who is this King so great in fame?
The LORD Almighty is his name,
he who in battle is victorious.

5. Lift up your heads, you arch and gate;
O ancient doors, rise up and wait.
Let him come in, the King of glory.
Who is this King, in glory great?
The LORD of hosts! Him we await.
The LORD, he is the King of glory.
2. Show your paths to me, your servant, and direct me in your ways. Lead me in your truth and teach me; guide and keep me all my days. LORD, I know your word is true, and with eager expectation all day long I hope in you as the God of my salvation.
Psalm 25

3. LORD, remember your great mercy, which has ever been of old. Call to mind your steadfast promise and your constant love unfold. LORD, forgive my sins of youth, my rebellion, my transgression. God of goodness, grace, and truth, think of me in your compassion.

4. He, the LORD, is good and upright; love and mercy he will show. Sinners are by him instructed in the way that they should go. He reveals the path of light to the humble and the lowly, guiding them in what is right, teaching them his laws most holy.
5. All God’s paths are love and mercy, faithfulness that never ends, for all those who keep his covenant and who honour its demands. As befits your holy name, LORD, forgive my evil doing; great though be my sin and shame, hear my prayer, your love renewing.

6. Who, then, fears the LORD sincerely, walking with him day by day? God will lead him safely onward, guide him in the chosen way. He will thrive, enjoy success; with his children he will share it, for his offspring God will bless in the land they will inherit.

7. God confides in those who fear him, has to them his friendship shown. To all those on him depending he will make his covenant known. I my eyes on him have set and will trust him without ceasing. He will free me from the net, from the snare my feet releasing.

8. Turn to me and show your favour; I am lonely and distressed. From my troubles me deliver; save me, for I am oppressed. LORD, I plead for your support as I pine away and languish. Heal the sorrows of my heart and relieve my growing anguish.
9. Look on me in your compassion
   and my misery relieve.
Wipe away all my transgressions;
all my sins, O Lord, forgive.
See how countless are my foes
who maliciously beset me.
Constantly their number grows;
see how fiercely they all hate me.

10. Guard my life! Do not neglect me:
    let me not be put to shame.
    May integrity protect me,
    for my hope is in your name.
    Trusting in your power supreme,
    I await my liberation.
    God, your Israel redeem
    from distress and tribulation.
1. O vindicate me, LORD!
   Deceit I have abhorred;
   I’ve led a life of blameless ways
   and never did I waver.
   I’ve always sought your favour;
   in you I’ve trusted all my days.

2. LORD, test my heart and mind;
   examine me to find
   how much I long to be upright.
   Let me not fall and perish;
   your steadfast love I cherish
   and in your truth I take delight.

3. With fools I do not sit;
   I hate the hypocrite
   and scorn all evil company.
   My seat I’ve never taken
   with those who have forsaken
   the pathways of integrity.
Psalm 26

5. O LORD, I love your house, the place that you once chose to be your home in Israel. I stand in adoration, for in your habitation your majesty and glory dwell.

6. LORD, sweep me not away with those who kill and slay, those who against you have rebelled — men with corruption tainted, with wicked schemes acquainted, those whose right hands with bribes are filled.

7. But I will blameless be. In mercy ransom me! My feet stand firm on level ground; in the great congregation I’ll join in celebration to praise the LORD with joyful sound.
PSALM 27

Of David.

1. God is my light, my refuge, my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord comes to my aid.

He is my strength in all my tribulation.

Of whom shall I then ever be afraid?

When foes who seek my life close in on me,

they all shall stumble and in anguish flee;

and though an army should in war draw near,

I will be confident, I will not fear.

2. One thing have I desired of God as favour,
that I may always in his temple dwell
to view the beauty of the Lord my Saviour
and in his house to seek his holy will.
For in the day of trouble and of strife
he in his shelter will preserve my life.
Within his tent he’ll keep me at his side;
high on a rock he safety will provide.
3. My head shall I lift up now with rejoicing above the hostile forces round about,
and in his tent, my jubilation voicing,
my sacrifice I'll bring with joyful shout.
I will exalt the steadfast love of God,
with song and music his great mercy laud.
LORD, hear me when I call and answer me.
Show me your favour, listen to my plea.

4. “Come, seek my face.” O LORD, so you have spoken,
and in response my heart says earnestly:
“Your face I’ll seek!” My vow will not be broken.
LORD, hear me! Do not turn away from me,
nor thrust your servant angrily aside,
for you have ever been my help and guide.
Do not forsake me, listen to my cry.
On you, O God my Saviour, I rely.
5. My father and my mother may forsake me:
the LORD is faithful and his help is sure.
Teach me your way. O LORD and Saviour, take me,
lead me on pathways level and secure,
for evildoers lie in wait for me.
Hand me not over to their tyranny.
False witnesses against me still arise;
they breathe out malice and abusive lies.

6. How I would have despaired in my affliction
if I had not believed that in this life
the LORD would show his goodness, his protection;
I would have perished in my tears and strife.
Wait for the LORD; be strong and undismayed.
The LORD is faithful. Why then be afraid?
Take courage, for his steadfast love is sure.
Wait for the LORD. His mercy shall endure.
2. LORD, do not drag me off to perish
with those who sin and evil cherish;
let me not share their condemnation.
They are a wicked generation;
to neighbours words of peace they feign
while in their hearts their misdeeds reign.

3. Let those who have in sin delighted
for all their evil be requited.
Reward them for each wicked action;
repay them duly with destruction.
Since they the works of God ignore,
he’ll tear them down, build them no more.
4. Praised be the God of my salvation, for he has heard my supplication. He is my strength, my shield forever; I trust in him: he fails me never. My heart exults with joyful song; to him all thanks and praise belong.

5. The LORD will grant us preservation; he as a fortress of salvation protects him whom he has anointed and all those as his heirs appointed. O be their shepherd! Safely guard and carry them forever, LORD.
Cedars _shatter_, forests _fall_,
mountains _shudder_ at _his_ call.
Like a calf _leaps_ Lebanon,
like a wild-ox Sirion.

God’s voice, _flames from heaven_ flashing,
with the roar of _thunder_ crashing,
shakes the _wilderness, and broken_
lie _its_ oaks _when he has_ spoken.

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1. **Might-y ones, your hom-age bring**
to the LORD, the awe-some King!

His the power and glo-ry be;
bow be-fore his maj-es-ty.

O-ver wa-ters rolls his _thun-der_
light-ning tears the clouds a-sun-der.

Hear God’s voice re-sound in splen-dour;
trem-ble at his might and gran-deur.

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2. **Cedars** _shatter_, forests _fall_,
mountains _shudder at his call._
Like a calf _leaps_ Lebanon,
like a wild-ox Sirion.

God’s voice, _flames from heaven_ flashing,
with the _roar of thunder_ crashing,
shakes the _wilderness, and broken_
lie _its_ oaks _when he has_ spoken.
3. Thunders roar and lightnings glare; God’s voice strips the forest bare. In his temple courts all cry: “Glory to the LORD on high!” He who reigns as King forever sits enthroned on flood and river. May the LORD give strength and power, peace upon his people shower.

PSALM 30

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple. Of David.

Geneva, 1551

1. LORD, yours all praise and glory be.

Out of the depths you lifted me,

and it was you who kept my foes

from gloating over all my woes.

You spared me from death’s desolation,

for you, LORD, heard my supplication.

2. Sing to the LORD, you saints of his, and praise him for his faithfulness. God’s anger quickly fades away; his love will for a lifetime stay. Tears fill the night, but soon thereafter the morning dawns with joy and laughter.
4. To you I cry for mercy, LORD.
What profit can my death afford?
If I go down into the grave,
can dust proclaim your power to save?
LORD, hear me! Show your grace and favour.
Come to my help and be my Saviour.

5. You turned my mourning and distress
to joyful dance and happiness,
stripped off my sackcloth of despair
and gave me robes of joy to wear.
O LORD my God, for your great favour
I will give thanks and praise forever.
PSA LM 31

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

1. In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; with you I am secure. Let me no shame endure. Come in your righteousness to save me. Incline your ear to hear me and with your help stay near me.

2. O LORD, come quickly to my rescue and be my rock and tower. To save me, show your power; you are my rock and mighty fortress. With safety you provide me and for your name’s sake guide me.

3. Free me from traps for me intended; O LORD, heed my request. In you I put my trust. Into your hands I give my spirit; I’m ransomed by your favour, LORD, God of truth, my Saviour!

4. I hate all those by whom vain idols are worshipped and adored, for I trust in the LORD. I will be glad and sing your praises, my exultation voicing while in your love rejoicing.
6. In my affliction, LORD, show pity. My eyes are dimmed with grief; my soul yearns for relief. My life is spent in pain and sorrow. See how my strength is failing, for I am weak and ailing.

7. I am the scorn of all my haters. My neighbours jest and jeer; friends flee from me in fear. I have become a broken vessel; I’m like the dead, neglected, forgotten and rejected.
8. I hear the whispering of many.  
There’s terror all around,  
and wicked plots abound.  
Against my life all are conspiring;  
they with their schemes await me,  
for bitterly they hate me.

9. But, LORD, I trust in you to save me;  
on you I will depend.  
My times are in your hand;  
deliver me from my pursuers.  
Let me no longer languish  
in my distress and anguish.

10. Now cause your face to shine upon me;  
let me not suffer shame,  
for I call on your name.  
But let all lying lips be silenced;  
let those whose pride abounded  
go to the grave dumbfounded.

11. LORD, how abundant is your goodness,  
which is reserved for all  
who fear you and recall  
what you have done for those who serve you,  
and all who once oppressed them  
will see that you have blessed them.

12. O LORD, your presence is their shelter;  
there the intrigues of men  
will target them in vain.  
You in your dwelling hide and shield them,  
far from all strife and slander,  
for you are their defender.
13. I praise you, LORD, for all your mercy,
the wonders of your love.

From you I felt cut off
when foes besieged me in a city,
but you gave liberation;
you heard my supplication.

14. O love the LORD, all you his people!
The faithful he will spare;
the proud he’ll give their share.
Be strong and let your hearts take courage.
His own he will deliver;
he will forsake you never.
2. When I kept silent, *sinful ways condoning,*
   *I pined away through my incessant* groaning.
   *Your hand weighed down on me in my deceit;*
   *my strength was sapped as by the summer’s heat.*
   *To you, O God of justice and compassion,*
   *I then at last acknowledged my transgression.*
   *I said, “My misdeeds I to you confess,”*
   *and you forgave my guilt and sinfulness.*
4. I will instruct you, *with my aid provide you,* 
and *in the way that you should go will guide you.*
My *counsel* will be *ever at your side,*
and, *keeping watch, I will with you abide.*
Be *not a fool, who has no understanding;*
do *not behave like horse or mule, depending*
on *bit and bridle to control their course;*
they *disobey unless restrained by force.*
5. With many woes the wicked are afflicted, but those who trust in God are well protected; them will the LORD with steadfast love surround. Those who revere him are with mercy crowned. Be glad, you righteous, in the LORD rejoicing; exult in him, your jubilation voicing. All you of upright heart, with joyful shout now let the praises of the LORD ring out.
Re-joice before the L ORD, you right-eous,
and with a new song praise his name.
Praise is most fitting for the up-right;
with harp and lyre de-clare his fame.
For the L ORD has spo-ken
words of truth un-bro-ken;
he is faith-ful still.
Right-eous-ness he treas-ures;
earth is with the meas-ures
of his good-ness filled.
2. By his command he made the heavens, their starry host by his decree. He gathered in his storehouse chambers the waters of the deepest sea. Let the earth revere him, and its peoples fear him. God spoke, and ’twas done. 
He set all creation firm on its foundation. Praise him, everyone!

3. God foils the scheming of the nations; he frustrates all the peoples’ plans. The Lord is steadfast in his purpose; for evermore his counsel stands. Shout with jubilation: Happy is the nation where the Lord is God. Freed from all oppression, they are his possession. Spread his praise abroad!

4. The Lord looks down from heaven, his dwelling, and he observes the human race; the earth and all its population he sees from that exalted place. He knows every nation; all are his creation, and their hearts he moulds. It’s the Lord who ever sees all their endeavour; he their works beholds.
Psalm 33

5. No king is saved by his great army;
by strength the mighty are not freed.
A war horse gives no hope of victory;
in vain the warrior trusts his steed.

But the LORD our Saviour
looks on those with favour
who his mercy trust,
and when famines grieve them
he will never leave them
prey to death and dust.
6. Our soul awaits the great Redeemer; our help and shield, him we acclaim. In him alone our heart rejoices, for we trust in his holy name. God of our salvation, hear our supplication; to your word be true. Let your love and favour rest on us forever, as we hope in you.

PSALM 34

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he left. Geneva, 1551

1. The LORD I will ex-tol, at all times bless his ho-ly name.

I will not cease to sing his praise; his good-ness I pro-claim.

I glo-ry in the LORD; let the af-flict-ed hear my voice.

O mag-ni fy the LORD with me!

With me in him re-joice.
Psalm 34

2. I sought the LORD in prayer; he heard my plea and answered me.

From all my worries and my fears the LORD has set me free.

Those who on him rely will never hang their heads in shame.

When this poor man cried out for help, the LORD delivered him.

3. The Angel of the LORD always encamps around all those who fear him and exalt his name; God saves them from their woes.

O come, then, taste and see that he, the LORD, is good and just. Blest is the man who turns to him and puts in him his trust.
4. All you who are his saints, revere the LORD and worship him, for those who fear him have no want; he richly blesses them. Though lions may grow faint and pangs of hunger may endure, those seeking him lack no good thing; in him they rest secure.

5. Come, children, hear my voice; you I will teach to fear the LORD. Who is the man desiring life, its pleasures and rewards? Keep then your tongue from wrong and let your lips no falsehood speak. Depart from evil and do good; true peace and concord seek.

6. The LORD from heaven above regards the righteous with his eyes, and when they call on him, his ears are open to their cries. But evildoers all the anger of the LORD must face; he cuts them off, and from the earth their name he will erase.

7. The righteous cry for help, and God in mercy hears their pleas; he graciously delivers them from all their miseries. The LORD is always near; the broken-hearted he will heal. Those crushed in spirit he will save, to them his love reveal.
9. Their countless evil deeds
will slay the wicked in the end.
All those who hate the righteous ones
he to their doom will send.
The LORD redeems the life
of those who serve and honour him;
all who in him their refuge take
he never will condemn.
2. Let those be humbled in disgrace
who seek my life, whose threats I face.
Let those by whom I now am hounded
retreat in shame and be confounded.
Foiled be the mischief they intend;
may they be chaff before the wind,
and may the Angel of the LORD
pursue them with his glittering sword.

PSALM 35
Of David.

1. Strive, LORD, with those who strive with me,
and fight my fight to set me free.

Take shield and buckler, rise in splendour;
come to my aid, be my defender.

Draw out the spear and bar the way
of those who seek me as their prey.

Speak now the reassuring word
that you are my salvation, LORD.
4. Then I will in the LORD rejoice
and praise him with a thankful voice.
With songs and shouts of exultation
I will delight in his salvation.
With all my being I will cry,
“Who is like you, O LORD Most High –
you who deliver those in need
from their oppressor’s power and greed?”

Psalm 35
5. Malicious witnesses arise;  
they question me and utter lies.  
With evil they for good repay me.  
I am perplexed. They seek to slay me.  
Yet I was grieved when they were sick;  
their sorrows hurt me to the quick.  
I went in sackcloth and would fast;  
I bowed in prayer, my eyes downcast.

6. My heart was sad as for a friend;  
I mourned, my mantle I would rend  
as one who sorrows for a brother  
and who with grief laments his mother.  
But when I stumbled, they rejoiced;  
gathering around, their hate they voiced,  
and wretches whom I did not know  
mocked me and gloried in my woe.

7. Unceasingly they scoff and jeer;  
they gnash their teeth at me and sneer.  
O LORD, how long yet will this rabble  
abuse me with their godless babble?  
O from these lions rescue me!  
Then, praising you who set me free,  
I’ll in the great assembly bless  
your mercy and your faithfulness.

8. Let enemies who scheme and lie  
ot not smirk at me and wink the eye,  
for without reason they accuse me.  
Those who so wrongfully abuse me  
do not speak peace, for they intend  
to harm the quiet in the land.  
I hear those loudmouths falsely claim:  
“We’ve seen that you have cause for shame.”
10. Let them not say, “Yes, we have won. We’ve swallowed him; he is undone!”
Those who against me are assembled be shamed, by their confusion humbled, and let all victory be denied to those puffed up with boasting pride. Let all who gloat at my expense be clothed with shame as recompense.
11. May those rejoice with shout and song who for my vindication long, and may they praise with happy voices the LORD, who in my good rejoices. Let them repeat how great he is and laud his perfect righteousness. Then my tongue, too, with word and song will praise his justice all day long.
1. Deep in my heart I know the voice
that lures the wicked to his choice
of sin and self-destruction.

Without all fear of God is he,
and blinded by complacency,
he dreads no retribution.

The words he speaks are wicked lies;
he sneers at what is good and wise
in malice unrelenting.

In bed at night he plots deceit.
On crooked paths he sets his feet,
from evil not repenting.
2. O LORD, your faithfulness and love reach to the heights of heaven above. Your justice lasts forever; it is like mountains vast and steep; your judgments all are ocean-deep. Both man and beast you favour. We in the shadow of your wings to you, O LORD, for refuge cling; you will not let us perish. All whom you to your feasts invite will drink from rivers of delight. Your precious love we cherish.

3. In your light we see light, O LORD; you are the fount from which is poured life bountiful and precious. Let not your caring love depart from those who are of upright heart; for evermore be gracious. O let me not by men of pride be trampled down or pushed aside and scornfully mistreated. See how God vindicates his own: there lie the wicked, overthrown and utterly defeated!
1. O do not fret because of evil-doers
   or envy those whose wicked deeds you see.
   They’ll fade like grass and lose their wealth and power;
   they like green plants will wither presently.
   Do good and trust in God, your rock and tower;
   dwell in the land, enjoy security.

2. The LORD will grant your heart’s desire as favour
   when you make him your joy and your delight.
   Commit your way to him. The LORD will ever
   let vindication dawn for the upright.
   He richly will reward your just endeavour;
   your cause will like the noonday sun shine bright.

3. Rest in the LORD with patient expectation,
   and when the wicked prosper in their way,
   do not be envious of their wealth and station.
   Let anger never in your heart hold sway
   and do not be embittered by vexation.
   It only leads to trouble and dismay.
4. Those hoping in the LORD for vindication will as their heritage possess the land. But evildoers, to their consternation, will be cut off by God’s almighty hand. Soon you will see their former habitation laid waste, reduced to nothing in the end.

5. The humble will possess the land forever and will enjoy great peace within their gates. The wicked, ready with their bow and quiver, may gnash their teeth at them in angry hate, but God looks down and laughs at their endeavour, for he has set the day of their defeat.

6. The wicked draw the broadsword of oppression and bend the bow to bring the needy down, to slay the upright by their bold aggression. But when the LORD comes, they’ll be overthrown; he’ll break their bows and drive them to perdition. They with their swords will pierce themselves alone.

7. Far better are the just man’s few possessions than all the wealth that evildoers hoard. Shattered will be the strong arm of oppression, but all the just find refuge in the LORD. He knows their days, and them he in compassion will with a lasting heritage reward.

8. They are not put to shame in days of trouble and will in famine have enough to eat. As for God’s foes, the glory of the rebel will fade like meadows in the summer’s heat and, vanishing like smoke of burning stubble, they all will perish, humbled in defeat.
10. When in their steps they falter and are shaken, the LORD himself will grasp them by the hand. Young once, now old, I’ve seen how God has taken good care of those who on his help depend: I’ve never known the just to be forsaken or seen their children begging in the land.

11. They’re always freely giving, freely lending; blest are their children, praised by everyone. Like them, do good, to those in need attending; turn from all sin and paths of evil shun. Then you will have as home through time unending the pleasant land that God for you has won.
12. The righteous man to wisdom gives expression; his tongue speaks only what is just and right. Within his heart, God’s law is his possession; his walk will never wander from its light. Though evil men have made his death their mission, the LORD will come to save him from his plight.

13. The LORD will never fail to show his favour, nor let the just by judges be condemned. Walk in his way; hope in the LORD your Saviour. He will exalt you, giving you the land, and when the wicked are cut off forever, you’ll see the outcome of what he has planned.

14. I’ve seen a wicked man whose ruthless power was firmly rooted like a native tree, a tree whose top above all others towered. But soon no trace of him was left to see; although I tried to find this evildoer, I searched in vain: forever gone was he!

15. Observe the upright and the just consider; there is a future for the man of peace. Transgressors will be wiped out altogether; the line of their posterity will cease. Then will the just rejoice with one another in blessings that will evermore increase.

16. The just look to the LORD for their salvation; he is their shelter in the time of stress, the fortress where they seek their preservation when by the wicked hounded and oppressed. In him they place their hope and expectation and find a refuge in his faithfulness.
1. LORD, re-buke me not in anger,
   and no longer
   let your wrath on me descend.
   You have pierced me with your arrows,
   brought me sorrows,
   bowed me down with your own hand.

2. You have of all strength bereft me;
   health has left me,
   and your wrath is my despair.
   My iniquities distress me
   and oppress me;
   they are more than I can bear.

3. All my wounds are foul and reeking;
   ever weakening,
   I am utterly bowed down.
   Bitter fruits of folly reaping,
   I go weeping,
   for my vigour is all gone.
Psalm 38

4. I am crushed and numb with anguish as I languish, and in misery I groan. LORD, to you my mournful crying and my sighing are not hidden or unknown.

5. How my pounding heart is straining; strength is waning, and my eyes are failing me. I am by my friends neglected and rejected; kinsmen see my plagues and flee.

6. Those who lie in wait to snare me will not spare me all the mischief they devise. Seeming deaf and dumb before them, I ignore them and I offer no replies.

7. You, O LORD my God, will hear me and be near me; you, O LORD, will heed my voice. Though my foot may slip and waver, show your favour; do not let my foes rejoice.

8. I am prone to fall or stumble, and I tremble, thinking of my grief and pain. I acknowledge my transgression in confession, deeply troubled by my sin.
Psalm 38

10. LORD, for sake me not but hear me and stay near me; be my help and shield, I pray. Hasten to my aid, O Saviour; show your favour. O my God, do not delay.
1. I said that I would closely guard my ways
   and keep from sinning with my tongue,
   that on my mouth a muzzle I would place
   while evil-doers round me throng.
   When, dumb and silent, I then held my peace,
   my grief and woe did but increase.

2. My heart grew hot, within me set ablaze.
   I cried, “LORD, let me know my end.
   Reveal to me the measure of my days;
   as just a handbreadth you extend
   my span of fleeting days, so frail and light.
   It is as nothing in your sight.

3. “Surely a man is nothing but a breath;
   he as a shadow goes his way.
   Surely in vain he struggles till his death;
   he piles up riches while he may,
   not knowing who will later gather them.
   His striving will not profit him.
Psalm 39

4. “What is it that I now shall wait for, LORD?
In you I place my hope and trust.
From all my sins deliverance afford,
and let me not by scorn be crushed.
My mouth I do not open, for I see
that it was you who chastened me.

5. “Remove from me the chastisement I fear,
lest I should perish through your wrath.
At your rebukes, that which a man holds dear
will fade and shrivel like a moth.
For man is merely breath and vanity;
yes, like a puff of wind is he.

6. “LORD, hear my cry, give ear to my request;
do not my bitter tears ignore.
For I with you am but a passing guest,
as all my fathers were before.
O turn away from me your watchful eye
and give me joy before I die.”
1. I waited and I waited for the Lord.

Then from the pit he lifted me;

from clay and mire he set me free:

the Lord bent down to me, my cry he heard.

Up-on a rock he brought me.

A new song he then taught me;

I shout his praise abroad.

Now many will draw near
to see all this and fear

and put their trust in God.
2. Blest is the man who makes the Lord his trust,
who does not turn to men of pride,
to those who in false gods confide,
but clings to him, our God so great and just.

Your plans for us to ponder,
your mighty deeds of wonder
you, Lord, have multiplied.

None can with you compare,
nor all your works declare,
nor count them, though he tried.
3. No sacrifice did you, O LORD, require; but you gave me an open ear. I said, “I’ve come; see, I am here. O God, to do your will is my desire. Now take my life and mould it. I’ve come: the book foretold it; it's written in the scroll. Your will is my delight; your law is day and night within my heart and soul.”

4. Before the congregation I profess the love and truth you have revealed. My lips, O LORD, I have not sealed; my heart has not concealed your righteousness. For everywhere I’ve spoken of faithfulness unbroken, of blessings from above. The great assembly heard of your trustworthy word and of your steadfast love.

5. Do not withhold your mercy and your grace; preserve me by your steadfast love and let your truth, shown from above, uphold me ever, LORD, before your face. For troubles all surround me; my many misdeeds hound me: I can no longer see. My sins, I do confess, are almost numberless; my heart is failing me.
Psalm 40

6. Be pleased, O LORD, to save and rescue me.

Come to my help! O LORD, make haste!

Let those be utterly disgraced who seek my life and cause my misery.

May they endure frustration and face humiliation.

Hear how they jeer at me.

May they in shame retreat, appalled at their defeat,

crushed by their infamy.
7. May those who seek you in your love rejoice; may they all say continually, “Great is the LORD in majesty,” and sing his praise with joyful heart and voice. Though I am poor and needy, the LORD himself will heed me; he will not turn away, for he will think of me and will my helper be. My God, do not delay!
2. I said, “O LORD, be merciful to me; heal me, for I have sinned.”
See how my enemies maliciously wait for my life to end.
Whoever visits me is not sincere,
for in his spite-filled heart
he spins false tales, for everyone to hear
as soon as he departs.
3. My enemies, with hatred fierce and grim, all whisper in disdain, “Some deadly sickness has its grip on him; he will not rise again.”
One of my dearest friends, who had my trust, with whom I shared my bread, lifts up his heel against me, like the rest, and wishes I were dead.

4. But you, O LORD, be merciful to me! Help me see justice done. By this I know that you are pleased with me: my haters have not won. I will forever in your presence dwell, by you upheld again. Blest be the LORD, the God of Israel, from age to age! Amen.
2. Bitter tears of lamentation
are my food by night and day.
In my deep humiliation
“Where is now your God?” they say.
Then my soul in sorrow longs
for the days when festive throngs
walked with me, their praises voicing,
to God’s house with loud rejoicing.

1. As a deer will thirst in anguish
for refreshing water brooks,
so for you, O God, I languish;
so my soul for comfort looks
to the living God above.
How I thirst for his great love!
When shall I appear before him
and within his courts adore him?
3. O my soul, why are you grieving, why disquieted in me?
Put your hope in God, believing he will still your refuge be.
I again shall see his face and extol him for his grace.
He will show his help and favour, for he is my God and Saviour.

4. I will from beyond the Jordan think of you in my distress and will even from Mount Hermon not forget your faithfulness. Deep re-echoes there to deep as the waters plunge and leap. Over me with thunderous roaring all your waves are wildly pouring.

5. But the LORD will send salvation and by day his love maintain; he will grant me preservation, and I will rejoice again. I will sing and pray at night to the God of life and light. He will in his mercy hear me and for evermore be near me.

6. I will ask my Rock and fortress, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go on in sadness, hounded by the enemy?” Their rebukes and scoffing words pierce my bones like pointed swords, as they say in proud defiance, “Where is God, your firm reliance?”
Psalm 42

7. O my soul, why are you grieving,
why disquieted in me?

Put your hope in God, believing
he will still your refuge be.

I again shall see his face
and exalt him for his grace.

He will show his help and favour,
for he is my God and Saviour.
2. You are my stronghold from oppression.
   O why then have you cast me off?
   Why let my foes with their aggression
   cause me such mourning and depression?
   See how they all around me scoff
   and at my sorrows laugh.

3. Send forth, O God of my salvation,
   your light and truth to be my guide
   and lead me to my destination:
   your holy hill and habitation,
   where I with you will safely hide
   in shelter you provide.
Psalm 43

5. My soul, why are you sad and grieving, why so oppressed with anxious care? Hope yet in God, his word believing; for, light and joy from him receiving, I’ll praise his name again and laud my Saviour and my God.
1. With our own ears, O God of glory,
we’ve heard our fathers tell the story
of all your deeds in days of old.

You drove out nations proud and bold.
You crushed them with your mighty hand;
your own you planted, made them flourish.
Not by their sword they won the land,
nor did their arm make them victorious.

2. It was your hand, your arm so mighty,
your face that shines on us so brightly,
for in your people you delight.
You are my King, my God, whose might
no foes of Jacob can oppose.
You, great Defender, will not fail us;
through you we overwhelm our foes
and trample down all who assail us.
Psalm 44

3. I do not trust in bow or bravery; my sword will from defeat not save me, but you, Lord, to our rescue came and put the enemy to shame. In God we glory all day long, for we are thankful for your favour. We shall exalt you in our song and praise your holy name forever.

4. Yet you have cast off and abased us; our foes in battle have disgraced us. You with our armies march no more; shameful defeat we must endure. We’ve all been plundered by the foe; you left us prey to devastation. Like sheep that to the slaughter go, you scattered us among the nations.
5. O God, no longer you uphold us, and for a trifle you have sold us. Our neighbours look at us and mock, for you’ve made us their laughingstock. The news of our disgrace has spread: we are a byword to the nations. They look at us and shake their head, and great is our humiliation.

6. I hear their taunts and see their sneering; bent on revenge, they keep on jeering. All this has brought us bitter shame, though we did not forget your name; we did not break your covenant and from your path we never wandered. You crushed us in the jackal’s haunt, and we to darkness were surrendered.

7. Had we the name of God neglected, had we to foreign gods defected, you would have seen it long ago. All secrets of the heart you know. Yet for your sake we all day long face death like sheep soon to be slaughtered. Our enemies are fierce and strong; we have been overwhelmed and scattered.

8. O Lord, wake up! Why are you sleeping? Come to our help, your promise keeping. Why is it that you hide your face? Have you forgotten our disgrace? We lie defeated in the dust. Rise up and help us! Do not slumber. Redeem us, you in whom we trust! Your steadfast love, O God, remember!
PSALM 45

For the director of music. To the tune of “Lilies.”
Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil. A wedding song.

1. With noble themes my heart and mouth are ringing,
and to the honour of the king I’m singing.
Into a hymn of praise my thoughts are strung,
and ready like a scribe’s pen is my tongue.
You are more handsome than all men around you;
O king, with lasting glory God has crowned you.
Poured on your lips is grace beyond compare;
so God has favoured you for evermore.

2. O mighty one, our hero and defender,
gird on your sword, ride forth in pomp and splendour;
as you rejoice in triumph and success,
advance the cause of truth and righteousness.
Let your right hand teach you dread deeds of power.
Your sharpened arrows make the nations cower;
they pierce the hearts of foes who love deceit,
and so the peoples fall beneath your feet.
3. Your throne, like God’s own throne, will stand forever; your sceptre’s righteousness will never waver. Justice you love and evil you detest. Therefore you have beyond your peers been blest, with oil of joy by God, your God, anointed. With myrrh and spices all your robes are scented. From palaces adorned with ivory stringed instruments please you with melody.

4. The queen, arrayed in Ophir’s gold, is seated at your right hand, by noble women greeted. Hear me, O daughter! As a royal spouse, forget your people and your father’s house. Then will the king desire your beauty’s splendour. He is your lord; to him your homage render. To you shall Tyre, your favour coveting, the richest gifts of gold and jewels bring.

5. Within her chamber, glorious is the princess; her radiant beauty draws adoring glances. She is arrayed for dazzling pageantry, adorned with gold and rich embroidery. She is led forth in glory and resplendence, with throngs of royal maidens in attendance. With joy and gladness they all shout and sing, proceeding to the palace of the king.

6. You will have many sons, O king most gracious; they will be born to take your fathers’ places. You’ll make them rulers over all the land; your kingdom will continue without end. Your name I will make known to all the nations, to be remembered through the generations. In celebration they will sing your praise forever and forever, all their days.
1. God is our strength, our shield and tower;
   he will defend us by his power.

   In times of trouble he is near;
   with him as help, we will not fear.

   Though earth may shake in great commotion
   and mountains plunge into the ocean,

   though roaring seas make mountains quake,
   his people he will not forsake.

2. There is a river always bringing
to God's own city joy and singing.
Within her are the holy courts
where God Most High his grace imparts.
He in her midst his place has taken;
therefore she never will be shaken.
The LORD will to her help appear
when he at break of day draws near.
3. The nations rage, the kingdoms tumble; our foes in terror shake and tremble. God’s voice in thunder echoes forth; his blazing anger melts the earth. The LORD Almighty, great and glorious, is on our side and goes before us. He is our fortress, firm and sure; with Jacob’s God we are secure.

4. Come, see God’s works: the desolations that he has brought upon the nations. He everywhere makes warfare cease and blesses all the world with peace. The bow he breaks, the spear he shatters; the shields he burns, and foes he scatters. See all the wonders he has done, the victories his hand has won.

5. “Be still and know, all you who hear me, that I am God, that you must fear me. As your exalted King I reign, and all the earth is my domain.” The LORD Almighty, great and glorious, is on our side and goes before us. He is our fortress, firm and sure; with Jacob’s God we are secure.
2. God went up on high with a joyful cry, 
and the trumpet’s sound echoed all around.
Now with loud acclaim magnify his name.
Play the harp and sing, praise the LORD our King.
He rules all the earth. Shout his glory forth!
Let your praise abound. Let the music sound!

3. Glorious is God’s reign, great is his domain.
He rules all the lands, issues his commands, 
and their princes all gather at his call.
As his people they Abraham’s God obey, 
for he from his throne claims them as his own.
Let him be adored as our sovereign Lord!
1. Great is the LORD! Him greatly laud with-in the cit-y of our God.

To him your thank-ful prais-es ren-der.

His ho-ly moun-tain soars in splen-dour.

Joy and pride of all the earth,

she pro-claims her Ma-ker’s worth.

In the north the cit-y tow-ers;

there the great King shows his pow-ers.

He, her sure de-fence, will ev-er

be her strength, for-sake her nev-er.
Her foes joined forces to advance
and led their troops with confidence,
but when those kings her walls surrounded,
they stood aghast and were astounded.

Stunned and shaken by the sight,
they in panic took to flight;
seized by pain, they quaked and trembled—
pains that labour pangs resembled—
as when, by an east wind battered,
ships of Tarshish all are scattered.
3. As we have heard, so have we seen here in the city, God’s domain, which he establishes forever: the LORD of hosts forsakes it never. In your temple we give thought to the peace your hand has brought, and your steadfast love we ponder. Your great name, O God of wonder, and your praise, your exaltation, reach the earth’s remotest nation.

4. God’s love and righteousness abound. Let Zion’s mount with joy resound; let Judah’s daughters be rejoicing, the praises of his judgments voicing. Walk round Zion’s citadels, count her towers and crenelles, see her walls, her strong foundations; tell the coming generations: Such is God, our God, forever; he, our guide, will leave us never.
2. In evil days why should my courage fail, though wicked men against me may prevail – those who in their possessions place their trust, who with their own great riches are impressed? None for his brother’s life can pay the price, nor give to God a ransom to suffice. From death’s decay man’s wealth can save him never, and it will not let him live on forever.
3. He surely sees that even wise men die, 
that foolish men cannot death’s power defy. 
The grave’s dark pit will ever be their home, 
their dwelling for all ages yet to come. 
Although to great estates they give their name, 
they leave their wealth for other men to claim. 
For man, despite the riches he may cherish, 
cannot abide but, like the beasts, will perish.

4. Such is the fate of proud and foolish men, 
the end of those who praise them for their sin. 
Into Sheol like sheep they headlong run; 
their shepherd, Death, stands by to urge them on. 
They all go down directly to the grave; 
from death’s corruption no one them can save. 
But God will pay my ransom and not leave me, 
for he into his glory will receive me.

5. When any man grows rich, be not afraid, 
nor let his glory render you dismayed. 
He will not take it with him when he dies; 
on his possessions he in vain relies. 
Though he may here enjoy the praise of men, 
he will not see the light of life again. 
For man, despite the riches he may cherish, 
cannot abide but, like the beasts, will perish.
1. The Mighty One, the LORD, proclaims his word;
   God speaks, and everywhere his voice is heard.
   He from the rising to the setting sun
   calls all the earth and summons everyone.
   Out of his Zion God shines forth in splendour;
   men to her perfect beauty homage render.

2. Our God will not keep silent. See, he comes!
   Fire goes before him and all things consumes;
   fiercely a tempest round about him swirls.
   His summons he at his creation hurls;
   the heavens above and earth below shall hear him:
   he comes to judge his people. May all fear him!

3. Hear the command God issues from his throne:
   “Go out and gather those who are my own,
   who made a solemn covenant with me,
   pledging by sacrifice their loyalty.”
   His justice is proclaimed throughout the heavens.
   God is the judge; by him is judgment given.
4. “My people, I will speak, so listen well. I testify against you, Israel. I am your God, the God whom you exalt. With all your sacrifice I find no fault; daily you bring burnt offerings before me and with your worship honour and adore me.

5. “I do not need your goats or your young bulls; I will not take them from your pens and stalls. Mine are the cattle on a thousand hills, mine every beast that in the forest dwells. All birds, all animals in field and pasture belong to me, their maker and their master.

6. “If I were hungry, why should you be told? For mine are earth and sea and all they hold. Shall I then drink the blood or eat the flesh of any goats or bulls that you possess? Would this be what you think I am demanding? Why should I need all this, on you depending?

7. “Bring the Most High your sacrifice of praise; fulfil your vows and thank him for his grace. Then in the day of trouble, call on me, and I will rise in answer to your plea; I will deliver you, my hand will save you, and you will praise me for the help I gave you.”

8. To sinners who do not hold him in awe God says, “What right have you to quote my law and to recite the words so dear to me? You mouth those covenant words so shamelessly but hate it when I of your sin remind you; my warning words you always cast behind you.
10. “These things you’ve done, and when I yet kept still
you thought I was like you and all was well,
but now I shall accuse you to your face
and so confront you with your vile disgrace.
Mark this, you who forget all that God gave you,
or I will tear you up, and none will save you.

11. “Great is my mercy. Happy he will be
who with his sacrifices honours me,
who in true thankfulness before me bows
and worships me as he fulfils his vows,
who walks the path of righteous dedication.
Him I will show my wonders of salvation.”
1. O gracious God, be merciful to me,
   and in your love, your infinite compassion,
   blot out my sins, remove all my transgressions.

O God, have mercy. Listen to my plea!

From every taint of evil wash me clean,
   and from my guilt and misery relieve me.

For I am deeply conscious of my sin,
   and all day long my misdeeds haunt and grieve me.

2. God, you have I offended, you alone.
   In mercy hear my sorrowful confession.
   How evil in your sight is my transgression!
   You rightfully condemn what I have done;
   just is, O God, the sentence I received.
   I have from birth been guilty, ever sinning;
   for in iniquity was I conceived,
   tainted with sin right from my life’s beginning.
Psalm 51

3. You teach me all the wisdom I must know,
   for you want truth to dwell and rule within me.

   Purge me with hyssop. Wash and fully clean me
till I am whiter than the whitest snow.

   Let me hear shouts of happiness and joy,
   and let the bones you crushed leap up in dances.

   From my transgressions turn your face away.
   Blot out my guilt, erase all my offenses.

4. Create in me a pure, clean heart, I pray;
   renew a steadfast spirit deep within me.
   Give me new life to strengthen and sustain me;
   God, from your presence cast me not away.
   Show me your mercy. Do not take from me
   your Holy Spirit, but again, O Saviour,
   let me the joy of your salvation see,
   and make me willing to obey you ever.
5. Then to transgressors I will teach your ways, and sinners will return to seek your favour. O God, from guilt of bloodshed me deliver; then shall my tongue your saving justice praise. I will aloud your righteousness proclaim; you are, O God, the God of my salvation. Lord, open then my lips to praise your name and let me sing my songs of jubilation.

6. Lord, you do not in sacrifice delight, or else I would with offerings try to please you. How could I ever with my gifts appease you? Burnt offerings find no favour in your sight. One gift alone is pleasing in God’s eyes: the contrite heart of one who has repented. A broken spirit you will not despise when humbly as a sacrifice presented.

7. In your good pleasure, bless Jerusalem; cause her to thrive, and shield her with your power. Build Zion’s walls, O God; uphold her towers, safeguard her citadels and strengthen them. Then you in sacrifices will delight, in gifts of those whom you in Zion shelter; burnt offerings will be pleasing in your sight. Then will young bulls be offered on your altar.
2. Evil you love far more than merit and falsehood more than truth. Sweet sounds your voice to all who hear it, but though your tongue is smooth, you love those words that will destroy; deception is your joy.

3. Surely God will break you forever and tear you from your tent. He will uproot all your endeavour; your cloak of lies he’ll rend. He’ll snatch you from your dwelling place; your name he will erase.
4. Awed by what was most unexpected, the just will laugh and say, “This is the man who once rejected God as his strength and stay. Look, he on his great wealth relied but perished in his pride.”

5. Like the olive tree I will flourish within the house of God. He will not let the upright perish. His praise I’ll shout abroad, for his unfailing love is sure and ever will endure.

6. O Lord, I will praise you forever; in you I hope and trust. It’s all your doing, God my Saviour; you give me peace and rest. I will among the saints proclaim the goodness of your name!
1. The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their horrid deeds they cherish;

not one of them does good, while just men perish.

None calls upon the LORD, none sings his laud or fears his rod.

2. The LORD looks down from heaven’s holy throne to see if anyone has understanding.
Not one seeks God, but wickedness intending, the sons of men, to sin and evil prone, his law disown.

3. Will evildoers never understand? 
As they would eat their bread, they are devouring my helpless people. God they are ignoring; they do not pray, but evil they have planned throughout the land.

4. See how they trembled, overwhelmed with fear; they panicked and their terror was unbounded. Their bones God scattered; they were left confounded, for he despised them. Foes may boast and jeer, but God does hear.

5. O Israel, you people of God’s choice, that out of Zion might come your salvation! When God restores the fortunes of his nation, let Jacob sing and Israel rejoice with happy voice.
2. God is my help though foes are strong;
he will not let their sword come near me
but will sustain my life and hear me
and graciously my days prolong.
Let wickedness recoil on all
who wrong me by their constant slander.
O faithful God, be my defender
and let them to their ruin fall.
3. I praise your name, for it is good;

LORD, you have saved me from my suffering.

To you I bring my free-will offering,

my sacrifice of gratitude.

You are the one who set me free

from all the troubles that distressed me.

I look on those who once oppressed me

and feast my eyes on victory.
PSALM 55

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.

Geneva, 1562

1. God, listen to my urgent pleading,
in mercy my petition heed ing;
do not ignore my supplications!
For troubled is my every thought;
I have no peace and am distraught,
worn out by all my tribulations.

2. The wicked constantly oppress me;
they with their taunts and stares distress me.
Their anger causes me to languish
in troubles and adversity.
Death’s terror has its grip on me;
my heart is filled with fear and anguish.

3. If I but like a dove were able
to spread my wings and flee all trouble,
so to find rest and be protected,
how quickly I would fly away
and in a far-off desert stay,
no more by raging storms afflicted.
5. If any foe would taunt and scorn me, 
I could endure it. Let him spurn me. 
It is not that an adversary 
treats me with insolence and pride, 
for then from him I still could hide 
and I would be prepared and wary.

6. No, it is you who have betrayed me, 
who with your malice have repaid me 
for fellowship and sweet communion, 
who walked with me when in God’s house 
we sang our praise and paid our vows – 
you, my best friend, my close companion!
7. May those who sin and evil cherish
meet sudden death and quickly perish,
alive into the grave descending.
I know that God will save me soon,
and I will evening, morning, noon
cry out to him, on him depending.

8. In battle he’ll redeem and shield me,
to my attackers never yield me.
My God, enthroned on high forever,
will come to strike them with his rod –
those men who have no fear of God,
who love their sin, repenting never.

9. My former friend is now a traitor,
a sleek-tongued covenant violator,
and all his talk is smooth as butter,
yet war is in his heart and mind;
his words are swords, though soft and kind.
Feigned is whatever he may utter

10. Cast on the LORD the cares that grieve you;
he will sustain you, never leave you.
The righteous he upholds forever
but flings into the deepest pit
the man of blood, the hypocrite.
In you I trust, O God my Saviour!
1. Be gracious, O my God, to whom I flee.

I am oppressed, strong is my enemy,

and all day long assailants harass me;

they fight against me proudly.

When I'm afraid, when fears of death enshroud me,

I trust in God, who never disavowed me.

His word I praise; he has with grace endowed me.

What can man do to me?

2. My words they keep on twisting all day long;
unceasingly they seek to do me wrong.

They band together in an evil throng
to watch my steps and hound me.

Intent on my destruction, they surround me.

In wrath cast down the peoples who confounded me;
repay them for their crime, defeat them soundly,

O God, my Helper strong.
3. My troubles and my woes you count and see. Put all my tears, O God to whom I flee, into your bottle and remember me when wicked men deceive me. Are all my sorrows, all the ills that grieve me, not in your book, and will you not relieve me? My enemies will all turn back and leave me the day you hear my plea.

4. For this I know, that God is at my side; in him, whose word I praise, I will confide; he heard my voice when in my fears I cried. The LORD is my defender. In God I trust, to him my praise I render. I will not fear, I trust his mercies tender. My foes will flee when he appears in splendour. Why then fear human pride?

5. I must perform to you, O God, my vow. Before your throne with grateful gifts I bow; thank-offerings I bring before you now, for you from death have saved me; yes, in the book of life you have engraved me. You have upheld me, foes could not enslave me, so that I in the light of life you gave me may walk before you now.
1. Be mer-ci-ful, be mer-ci-ful to me;
   O God, with you I find se-cu-ri-ty.
   The shad-ow of your wings is my pro-tec-tion;
   un-til the storms pass by, to God I flee –
   to God Most High, who charts my life’s di-rec-tion.

2. He’ll send from heaven and save me as before,
   frustrating those who hound me evermore.
   His steadfast love will comfort me in sorrows
   though I lie down amid the lions’ roar,
   beset by foes whose teeth are spears and arrows.

3. O God, exalt yourself above the skies!
   Let over all the earth your glory rise.
   My soul was grieved, for where my way I wended
   they set a snare, but to their great surprise
   they fell into the pit for me intended.

4. O God, my heart is steadfast: I will sing
   and, making music, praise my glorious King.
   Awake, my soul! All slumber be forsaken.
   Awake, O harp and lyre! Your praises bring!
   Come, join with me: the dawn I will awaken!

5. Among the nations I will sing your praise
   and proclaim the wonders of your ways.
   For to the clouds extends your love unfailing;
   your faithfulness outdistances our gaze.
   Through all the earth your glory be prevailing!
1. Do you in-deed, you men so might-y,
de-ree in jus-tice what is right?
Are all your ver-di-cts truth and light,
and do you judge man-kind up-right-ly?
No, in your hearts you wrongs de-vise;
you deal out vi-o-lence and lies.

2. Right from their birth the wicked wander,
right from the womb they go astray;
deceit and falsehood mark their way.
Like serpents’ venom is their slander;
they’re deaf like snakes that block their ears
lest they the charmer’s voice should hear.

3. God, break the teeth of those that slaughter;
repay them with their victims’ pangs;
tear out their savage lion fangs.
O let them vanish like the waters
that over rocks and gravel pass;
cause them to wither like the grass.
4. Let them to ru-in be sur-ren-dered
like snails that turn to slime and die;
as to un-time-ly births, de-ny
to them the gift of sun-light’s splen-dour.
Let them like thorns be cleared a-way;
de-stroy them, LORD, with-out de-lay.

5. Then will the righteous with rejoicing
look on when God his vengeance shows;
they’ll bathe their feet in blood of foes.
Then men will say, their gladness voicing,
“The righteous their reward will see:
there is a God of equity.”
Psa 59 1. God, from my enemies protect me,
from those who rise up to afflict me.

Come to deliver me again
and save me from blood-thirsty men.

They lie in wait and will not spare me;
fierce men are plotting to ensnare me.

Yet for no sin of mine or fault
are they preparing their assault.

2. LORD God Almighty, rise to save me
and do not let my foes enslave me.
You are the God of Israel,
our stronghold and our citadel.
Come, rouse yourself and judge the nations
who taunt you with their provocations.
Spare none of those who treacherously
plot evil and iniquity.
3. Like packs of savage dogs that howling
through all the city streets are prowling,
my enemies each night return
to taunt me with their bitter scorn.

Their tongues are swords, their mouths are spewing
the venom of their evil-doing,
for, “Who can hear all this?” they say
and boldly go their haughty way.

4. But, Lord, you laugh at all those nations
and mock their wicked aspirations.
O God my Strength, for you I long;
you are my fortress, firm and strong.
My loving God will come to meet me
and with his promised help will greet me,
soon letting me in triumph see
the downfall of my enemy.
5. Do not yet kill those who reject you, or else my people will forget you. O God of might and great renown, come, scatter them and bring them down. Let them be humbled, crushed and broken, for all the sins their mouths have spoken. Let those who on deceit relied be caught and trapped in their own pride.

6. For all their lying and their cursing and for the hatred they are nursing, O God, consume them, I implore, consume them till they are no more. Show them your anger, let them cower before your justice and your power. Then it will everywhere be known that God rules Jacob, he alone.

7. Each evening they, like dogs that howling through street and marketplace are prowling, come back and look about for prey as here and there they roam and stray. Their ravenous hunger knows no pity, and scavenging throughout the city, they bark and bellow, loud and shrill, and growl unless they get their fill.

8. You will at daybreak hear me singing, to you, O God, my praises bringing, for I will glory in your might and in your steadfast love delight. You are my strength, my rock and tower, my refuge in the darkest hour. Your praise I sing and shout abroad, O mighty Fortress, loving God!
2. God,
you have made
your people see
times of extreme adversity.
Our life became one harsh ordeal;
you gave us wine that made us reel.
But you have raised a banner high
for those who on your help rely.
Now show your might and save your nation;
to those you love, grant liberation.
3. Our mighty King, the God of grace, has spoken in his holy place:
“All Succoth’s vale and Shechem’s land
I will divide as I have planned.
All Gilead belongs to me;
Manasseh is my property.
My helmet: Ephraim, strong defender.
My sceptre: Judah, firm commander.”

4. God shamed his foes with words that sting:
“At Edom I my sandal fling;
I Moab as my washbowl claim
and in Philistia shout my fame.”
God, who but you can be our guide
to Edom, so well fortified?
But you have cast us off in anger
and with our armies march no longer.

5. To us again your favour show;
grant us your aid against the foe.
Uphold us as none other can,
for worthless is the help of man.
Our God will crush the enemy;
with him, we’ll gain the victory.
Our proud oppressors he will humble,
tread on their necks and make them tremble.
PSALM 61
For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.

1. Listen to my cry and hear me;
   God, be near me.
   In your mercy heed my prayers.
   When I call from far-off places,
   God, be gracious,
   for my heart is faint with cares.

2. Lord, with your support provide me;
safely guide me
to the rock for me too high.
You, my refuge and my tower,
showed your power
when my enemies drew nigh.

3. Keep me in your tent forever.
   Leave me never!
   God of grace, to you I cling.
   Shield me with your love and favour,
   O my Saviour,
in the shelter of your wings.
4. When I made my vows, you heard me; you reward me with the heritage of those who on bended knee adore you and before you in your steadfast love repose.

5. Show your love: the king’s life lengthen and him strengthen. May his reign go on and on. Richly bless all his endeavour; let him ever sit before you on his throne.

6. Be, O God of might and splendour, his defender, and your steadfast love display. Then will I, your name professing, for your blessing thank you with my vows each day.
1. In God a-lone my soul finds rest,
   for in his faith-ful-ness I trust;
   He is the rock that will not quake,
   and none can this my strong-hold shake
   or move me from its firm foun-da-tion.

2. Say, how much longer will you dare
   attack a man as though he were
   a broken fence, about to totter?
   You love deceit and plan his fall;
   though with your mouth you wish him well,
   you in your heart your curses mutter.

3. Find rest, my soul, in God alone.
   Him only I depend upon
   for all my hope and my salvation.
   He is the rock that will not quake,
   and none can this my strong-hold shake
   or move me from its firm foundation.
4. On God rests my deliverance, and he my honour will advance; he is my mighty rock, my shelter. O people, trust in God alone; to him make all your troubles known. With his support you will not falter.

5. Mere breath are those of low estate, and a delusion are the great. They rise when in the scales you weigh them. Together they are but a breath – mere mortals, prey to doom and death. Their sudden downfall will dismay them.

6. Put no false hope and confidence in robbery and violence; do not take pride in theft and plunder. Although your riches may increase, they will not give you rest and peace. Why set your heart on earthly splendour?

7. God once has spoken, I have heard the two-fold never-failing word that you, God, are my strong defender, that steadfast love is yours, O Lord, for all receive their just reward when on their deeds you judgment render.
2. Your steadfast love is better far than life itself, O God my Saviour.
Your faithfulness will never waver;
my lips your praises will declare.
With joyful singing I will bless you
and all my life your love proclaim.
With hands uplifted in your name,
I will in thankful prayer address you.
3. You fill my soul with rich delight
as with the joys of lavish feasting,
and as I meditate while resting,
I think of you throughout the night.
I cling to you, my strong deliverer,
and in the shadow of your wings
my joyful praise I shout and sing,
for your right hand upholds me ever.

4. When foes your servant seek to slay,
in yawning pits will earth receive them.
The sharpened sword will sorely grieve them;
they will become the jackal’s prey.
But then the king in God will glory
with all who swear by his great name,
for liars he will put to shame
and silence every adversary.

PSALM 64

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

Heed my complaint, O God, and hear me.
Save me from all my enemies;
hide me from their conspiracies,
from noisy mobs that make me weary.
O God, be near me!
Psalm 64

2. Their tongues the sharpest swords resemble; a deadly dart is every word as boldly, by no fear deterred, they strike the blameless and the humble to make them stumble.

3. They hatch their schemes for my destruction and cunningly conceal their snare. “No one will see it,” they declare and with their smug self-satisfaction boast of their action.

4. But God will shoot them with his arrow, and their own tongues will bring them shame. Many will shake their heads at them; their downfall will be quick and thorough, much to their sorrow.

5. Then all will fear our great defender; they will God’s mighty deeds proclaim and, praising his exalted name, will stand in awe as they all ponder his works of wonder.

6. Come, praise the Lord for his salvation! Let all the just in him delight; let them seek refuge in his might and thank him for their preservation with jubilation.
2. When we are grieved by our transgressions and overwhelmed by sins, you blot them out in your compassion and give us peace again. How blest are those whom you have chosen, whom you in love embrace; within your courts, in you reposing, they have a dwelling place.
3. O God, you in your habitation
will all your saints provide
with every blessing of salvation,
till all are satisfied.

By awesome deeds, so just and mighty,
you save us from our foe;
to those who walk with you uprightly
your justice you will show.

4. You are the hope of distant nations;
you by your strength and power
placed mountains on their firm foundations
and stilled the ocean’s roar.
Those who make far-off lands their dwelling
all tremble at the sight;
both dawn and dusk, in praise excelling,
with joy acclaim your might.
5. O God, you show the earth your favour, the bounty of your hand, for filled with water is your river, enriching all the land.
You soften furrows with your showers and bless the sprouting grain.
How great, O God, your love and power throughout all your domain!

6. You crown the year, O Fount of blessing, with gifts to cheer the land;
your goodness fills the earth, expressing the wonders of your hand.
The hills rejoice. The meadows teeming with flocks that skip and spring,
the golden grain, in valleys gleaming – they shout for joy and sing!

Psalm 65
2. “All peoples, bowing down before you, sing praises to your glorious name; to you, O God, they all pay homage, with hymns of joy declare your fame.”

O come and see with reverent wonder the awesome deeds that God has done, his mighty works among the nations, the victories his hand has won.
3. His strength to Israel revealing,
he turned the sea to arid land.
When they on foot passed through the river,
the waters heeded his command.
We sang his praise, in him rejoicing
who by his might rules without end;
his eyes keep watch on every nation.
Let rebels not his power withstand.

4. Come, bless our God with joyful voices.
All nations, let his praise resound,
for he has kept our feet from stumbling;
in him we have a refuge found.
Your people you, O God, have tested
as ore is in the furnace tried;
we in the fire of your refining
have been, like silver, purified.

5. Into the net, O God, you brought us,
laid heavy burdens on our backs.
Foes drove right over us in chariots;
you humbled us by their attacks.
We went through fire, we went through water,
but you then showed your power and grace,
for you delivered us, your people,
and brought us to a spacious place.

6. Your holy temple I shall enter
and there my thanks to you express;
I shall fulfil the vows I promised
in days of trouble and distress.
Burnt sacrifices I shall offer,
with choicest fatlings pay my vows;
with smoke of rams, with goats and bullocks
I shall adore you in your house.
8. If I had cherished any evil, 
the Lord would not have heeded me.  
I know that God indeed has heard me; 
he has attended to my plea. 
Forever blest be God my Saviour, 
who has not turned away my prayer, 
nor has withheld from me his mercy, 
his never-failing love and care.
1. May God be mer-ci-ful and bless us,
    and cause his face on us to shine;
    may he to us be ev-er gra-cious,
    il-lu-mine us with light di-vine.
    May he to all na-tions show his rev-e-la-tion
    and his ways un-fold.
    Great is God our Sav-iour.
    May all see his fa-vour
    and his power be-hold.
2. Let all the peoples come before you
to sing their praises to your name.
Let all the heathen tribes adore you,
with joy your mighty deeds proclaim,
for you judge the nations,
rule their populations;
you they have as guide.
You as their defender
to all peoples render
justice far and wide.
3. Let all the earth, O God our Saviour, your love and faithfulness extol. The land has yielded through your favour its harvest rich and bountiful. God is good and gracious; he will richly bless us – he, our God and King. Let all peoples fear him, all the earth revere him, of his glory sing.
PSALM 68


1. God shall arise and by his might
   put all his enemies to flight;
   his triumph will be glorious.

When those who hate him, scattered, flee
   before his power and majesty,
   our God will be victorious.

For just as wind blows smoke away,
   he will disperse the proud array
   of those who evil cherish.

Like wax that melts before the fire,
   they will be vanquished by God’s ire;
   the wicked all will perish.
2. Now let the just with joyful voice
in God’s victorious might rejoice;
let them exult before him!
O sing to God, his praise proclaim,
and with your psalms extol his name;
in joyful song adore him.
Lift up your voice and sing aloud
to him who rides upon the clouds
high in the spacious heavens.
The LORD – that is his glorious name.
Rejoice in him with loud acclaim;
to him be glory given.

3. He, father to the fatherless,
defence of widows in distress,
is in his habitation.
God in the goodness of his grace
gives lonely ones a dwelling place;
he grants them consolation.
He leads the captive out to see
the joys of new-found liberty,
for bounteous is God’s mercy.
But who against him dare rebel
must evermore with famine dwell
in deserts dry and thirsty.

4. O God, when you went on ahead
and through the barren desert led
the flock you had assembled,
you caused the earth to quake and cower;
O God of Israel, great in power,
before you, Sinai trembled.
You with abundant rain, O LORD,
your weary heritage restored
and, as you had decided,
you let your people settle there;
you blessed them with your lavish care
and for the poor provided.
Psalm 68

5. When God but spoke his mighty word,
great was the host whose shouts were heard
as they proclaimed their tidings:

“The kings are fleeing in despair!

Our women in the plunder share,

the spoils of war dividing!

To those who stayed at home they bring

as gift a dove with silvered wings

and brightly gilded feathers.”

Before the Lord the kings all fled

like drifting snow on Zalmon spread

by blasts of stormy weather.
Psalm 68

6. O Bashan’s mountain, massive height, far higher than all peaks in sight, so great in rugged grandeur! O you whose tops are seen from far, whose peaks so high and numerous are, majestic in their splendour! Why do you still with envy look at Zion’s mount, which God once took and made his throne’s location? There he for evermore will dwell; the LORD once made this humble hill his glorious habitation.

7. God’s chariots, mighty to behold, are twice ten thousand thousandfold; the mountains quaked and trembled. From Sinai, God victoriously came down into his sanctuary; in Zion all assembled. When you, O Lord, went up again you led your captives in your train with tribute in abundance; gifts, too, from those who rebels were – that you, LORD God, for evermore, might dwell there in resplendence.

8. Blest be the Lord, who on our way provides for us, and day by day upholds us by his power. God of Salvation is his name; this glorious name shall we proclaim. He is our shield and tower. Our God, the LORD, is strong to save from mortal danger, from the grave and every cruel oppression. But God will crush the heads of foes, the hairy crown of him who goes in ways of foul transgression.
The Lord has spoken: “My own hand will bring your foes from far-off lands; from Ba-shan I will guide them. From the remotest shores and seas I will retrieve your enemies, though ocean depths should hide them, for I your triumph will complete, that you with joy may bathe your feet in blood of conquered nations and see your dogs lap up their share as for my people I prepare my righteous vindication.”
10. The solemn throngs are gathered here; to God my King do they draw near. They come with sounding cymbals, the singers first, the minstrels last, and in among them, filing past, the maidens play their timbrels. In this great congregation’s throng let God be praised in joyful song, O Jacob’s generation! There Benjamin, the smallest clan, leads Naphtali and Zebulun, Judah and all the nation!

11. Lord, let your glorious power be known; show us the strength on which your own have in the past depended. Because you have your temple here, kings in Jerusalem appear with gifts for you intended. Rebuke the beasts among the reeds, both bulls and calves, those filled with greed, all who in war take pleasure. Let envoys come from Egypt’s land; to God let Ethiopia’s hand stretch out to give its treasure.

12. Praise God and shout his glory forth, O kings and kingdoms of the earth! In joyful song adore him. Praise him who rides the ancient sky, who thunders forth his battle cry; let all bow down before him. Proclaim his power and spread his fame, for great in Israel is his name; his might is in the heavens. O awesome God, you from your throne with power and glory bless your own. To you all praise be given!
1. Save me, O God! The waters rise and leap:
   up to my neck the roaring floods surround me.
There is no foot-hold, deadly dangers hound me.
I’ve come into the waters of the deep.
I am engulfed by floods for me too great;
my throat is parched, I’m weary with my crying.
My eyes grow dim as for my God I wait.
Come to my rescue, LORD, and heed my sighing.

2. More numerous than the hairs upon my head
are those who without any cause reject me,
those enemies who constantly afflict me
and whose malicious treachery I dread.
Must I restore now what I did not steal?
I know I’ve done the things you have forbidden.
O God, my folly I did not conceal;
from you my wrongs and misdeeds are not hidden.
3. May those who put in you their hope and trust not through my doing be disgraced and slandered. May they, O LORD, not be to shame surrendered because I’ve been unfaithful or unjust. O God of Israel, taunts and shame I’ve borne, and for your sake I am to friend and brother a stranger whom they disavow and scorn, an alien to the sons of my own mother.

4. LORD, for your house I am consumed with zeal; taunts meant for you have now on me descended. I weep and fast. By none I am defended; deep are the shame and sorrow that I feel. I put on sackcloth, for my grief is great, but people laugh at me and keep on sneering. I am the talk of idlers at the gate, the song of drunkards revelling and jeering.

5. But though they mock, O LORD, to you I pray; at your own time, O God my Helper, hear me. In your great love and faithfulness be near me, and in the mire let me not sink away. Deliver me from waters dark and deep, from those who hate me. God, show me your favour and draw me from the current’s mighty sweep. Let death not close its mouth on me, O Saviour.

6. Out of the goodness of your steadfast love, LORD, turn to me, with your great mercy bless me. Do not conceal your face when foes oppress me; in all my troubles, hear me from above. Make haste to answer me, do not delay. Come, rescue me, redeem your faithful servant. Save me from those who seek me as their prey, who hate me with a hatred fierce and fervent.
Psalm 69

7. You know of all the scorn and shame I bear;
   LORD, you have seen how enemies disgrace me,
   how with their constant insults they abase me.
   Taunts broke my heart, and deep is my despair.
   I looked for pity, but I found deceit;
   for comforters, but I saw them desert me.
   They gave me bitter gall as food to eat
   and vinegar as drink when I was thirsty.

8. At their own table let my foes be trapped,
   ensnared when for their feasting they assemble.
   Their eyes be darkened so that they will stumble;
   from shaking limbs let all their strength be sapped.
   Pour out your fury, let it not abate,
   and by your wrath let them be overtaken.
   Let their encampments be left desolate;
   let all their tents be utterly forsaken.
9. They persecute those wounded by your hand, and talk of those whose pains and sorrows please them. Charge them with crime on crime; do not release them, nor let them freed from guilt before you stand. LORD, from the book of life blot out their names; let none of them be in your scroll recorded. Do not include them with those free from blame; let good and evil justly be rewarded.

10. I am in pain, great is my misery; O God, protect me, sending your salvation. Then I will praise your name with jubilation and give you thanks. To you all glory be. More than an ox or bull as sacrifice, my song of praise will please my God and Saviour. His captive people he will not despise; he hears the needy, showing them his favour.

11. Let heaven and earth praise him with grateful songs, the seas and all that stirs in them adore him; let all creation shout with joy before him: God will save Zion. Praise to him belongs. All Judah’s cities will the LORD rebuild. There will his servants be, in praise excelling. With their descendants will the land be filled; there those who love him all will find a dwelling.
1. Be pleased to save me, God, I pray;
   O LORD, to my deliverance hasten
   and with confusion all those chasten
   who seek to take my life away.

   May those who plan my ruination
   be humbled and in panic flee.

   May those who jeer and laugh at me
   retreat in shame and consternation.

2. But may all those who seek your face,
   who love and cherish your salvation,
   be glad and sing with jubilation,
   “Exalted be the God of grace.”
   But I am poor and weak as ever;
   come quickly, God, and rescue me,
   for you alone can set me free.
   Do not delay, O LORD my Saviour.
2. LORD, be to me a rock and fortress,
and issue your command

to save me from the hand
of those who savagely attack me.
Protect me from their power;
God, be my strength and tower.

3. Since I was young, in you I’ve trusted;
on you I’ve leaned from birth.
From when you brought me forth
and from my mother’s womb you took me,
you’ve blessed me with your favour.
I’ll sing your praise forever.

4. I as a portent am regarded,
a sign for all to see.
But you, LORD, are to me
my strong and steadfast rock of refuge,
my powerful defender.
All day I praise your splendour.
6. Do not stand far away but help me. 
O God, my God, make haste! 
May all those be disgraced 
who seek my harm and who accuse me. 
May they all be confounded, 
by scorn and shame surrounded.

7. But I will hope in you forever 
and praise you more and more. 
With you I am secure. 
LORD, in your righteousness I glory. 
When enemies oppressed me, 
you with your justice blessed me.

8. O LORD, your works of might and glory 
I will proclaim in song 
and praise them all day long. 
They far exceed my understanding. 
Your righteous deeds I treasure; 
they are beyond all measure.
9. You from my youth, O God, have taught me; I to this day proclaim your wondrous works, your fame. Now that I’m old and grey, stay near me and do not leave me ever; O God, forsake me never.

10. To all the coming generations I will with great delight proclaim your power and might. Your righteousness is all-excelling; it reaches highest heaven. To you all praise be given.

11. Great are your deeds in might and splendour. God, who with you compares? You’ve brought me bitter cares, but from earth’s deepest pits you’ll raise me to ever greater glory. Your comfort will restore me.

12. With harp and lute I’ll sing to praise you for all that you have done, O Israel’s Holy One. Your love and faithfulness extolling, I’ll shout with joy and fervour, for you are my preserver.

13. My lips and tongue will praise your goodness; I will with heart and soul your righteous deeds extol. You humbled those who sought my ruin; your praise I will be voicing, all day in you rejoicing.
PSALM 72

Of Solomon.

Geneva, 1543

1. O God, give to the king your justice,
   his son your righteousness.
You are the God in whom our trust is;
your hand alone can bless.
May he, the royal son, be reigning
with judgments true and sure,
to all your people right or-daining,
your justice to the poor.

2. May for the people hill and mountain
   bring forth the peace they seek,
   and justice, gushing like a fountain,
   restore the faint and weak.
   May he defend the poor and needy;
   may he their children save,
   and crush oppressors, proud and greedy,
   who for their downfall crave.
3. May he, so high above the nations, live while the sun endures – he who throughout all generations our joy and peace ensures; and may he be like rain that drenches the meadows parched and pale, like showers whose abundance quenches the thirst of hill and vale.

4. May in his days the righteous flourish and peace on earth be found; may for all those who justice cherish his righteousness abound. Long may he live and rule our nation while sun and moon endure; may he in every generation our peace and joy ensure.

5. For evermore may his dominion from sea to sea extend, and from the River to the regions of earth’s remotest end. May every tribe and tongue adore him, and may from east and west his foes all come to bow before him, his haters lick the dust.

6. May princes, moved by awe and wonder, then travel miles on miles, that they may him the tribute render of Tarshish and the isles. May Sheba with its gifts adore him, and Seba treasures bring. May rulers all fall down before him and serve him as their king.
Psalm 72

8. Long may he live! May all present him with Sheba’s finest gold; as tribute may the nations grant him most precious gifts untold. May people join in celebration to praise him without end. For him let prayers of invocation to heaven’s throne ascend.
9. Throughout the land may grain be growing from plains to mountain tops; like Lebanon, may fields be glowing with bounteous golden crops. May in the cities people flower like hillsides in the spring. May all the earth acclaim his power and of his glory sing.

10. The king whose name we are professing shall like the sun endure. In him all nations find their blessing; their peace will be secure. Blest be the LORD, for he so glorious alone does wondrous things. O God, in all the earth our chorus with “Amen, Amen” rings.
1. How truly God his goodness shows,
   bestowing favour on all those
   who are in Israel pure-hearted
   and have not from his ways departed.

   But as for me, I slipped almost,
   for when the arrogant would boast
   of earthly wealth and luxury,
   I envied their prosperity.

2. No suffering lies in store for them;
   they all are sleek and sound of limb.
   They do not share our pain and anguish;
   no troubles ever make them languish.
   Pride is their necklace, and they dare
   make violence the robe they wear.
   Their hearts with follies overflow,
   and in their minds illusions grow.
3. They speak with scorn and haughtiness; they scoff, and threaten to oppress. Their mouth lays claim to heaven’s regions; their tongue demands the earth’s allegiance. So people turn to praise these men, and they can find no fault with them. “God does not see it,” they declare. “The Most High does not know or care.”

4. Such are the wicked – they’re secure; their wealth increases evermore. Surely in vain I’ve been pure-hearted and have not from God’s laws departed, and I in vain have washed my hands in purity and innocence. For all day long I suffer here, and with new grief each dawn draws near.

5. If I had spoken this way too, I surely would have been untrue to all the present generation, the children of your holy nation. I tried to probe the mystery but found it was too much for me till, entering God’s holy place, I saw the destiny they face.

6. O Lord, you surely set them all on slippery ground to make them fall. You cause the arrogant to stumble; they headlong to their ruin tumble. How suddenly destroyed are they, by terrors wholly swept away! As one who wakes from dreams, you rise and them as fantasies despise.
8. Whom *do I have* in heaven *but you?*
You, *God of grace,* my *faith renew:*  
*I seek no earthly wealth or splendour;*  
to *envy* I will *not surrender.*  
Although *my flesh and heart* may fail,  
God *is my strength:* *I shall* prevail,  
for *he whose steadfast love* is sure  
will *be my portion* evermore.
9. Those who from you have gone astray shall perish in their evil way. You will destroy all who, false-hearted, from your commandments have departed. But as for me, in God I trust, for with his presence I am blest. My refuge is the Lord alone; I will proclaim all he has done.

PSALM 74

A maskil of Asaph.

1. O God, why have you cast us all away? O why have we forever been rejected? Why do you leave your sheep all unprotected and let your anger smoke from day to day?

2. Remember your own people, those you love, your heritage, your chosen congregation, by you redeemed and saved from condemnation in your good pleasure, shown from heaven above.

3. Do not forget Mount Zion, where you dwelt; draw near to its perpetual desolations. See the destruction which the hostile nations brought on the place where once your people knelt.
Psalm 74

4. O God, your foes with loud and angry roars right in your temple raised their heathen banners, destroyed your house with hatchets and with hammers, and smashed the carvings that were there before.

5. They boldly set your holy house ablaze, defiled the dwelling of your name so glorious. They boasted that their might would be victorious and burned each place where you received our praise.

6. We see no signs; we have no prophets left, not even one by whom your word is spoken. Is then the bond with you forever broken? How long shall we of comfort be bereft?

7. How long, O God, will enemies yet scoff? Will the reviling of your name cease never? Will you hold back your strong right hand forever? Withdraw it from your bosom. Cut them off!

8. Yet you, O God, my King from days of old, throughout the earth worked wonders of salvation. The sea you split wide open for your nation and broke the heads of dragons fierce and bold.

9. The heads of proud Leviathan you crushed, its flesh as food on desert beasts bestowing. You, LORD, broke open fountains ever-flowing and dried up streams where mighty waters rushed.
10. Yours is the day, yours also is the night; sun, moon, and stars have you set in the heavens. To all the earth you boundaries have given; the seasons you established by your might.

11. Remember, LORD, the scoffing of your foes; hear how your name is taunted by the wicked! Yield not your dove to beast of field and thicket; do not forget your children in their woes.

12. Look to the covenant! Hold it in regard, for terror reigns in all the land’s dark places. Let the downtrodden not endure disgraces, and may the needy praise your name, O LORD.

13. Rise up, O God, rise and defend your cause. Ignore the taunting of your foes no longer; do not forget their shouts of raging anger, the uproar which continues without pause.
2. “When the *proper* time draws near,
I my judgment will reveal.
Then the *earth may shake and reel*
and *all people quake with fear,*
but its *pillars I uphold,*
I who *fashioned* it of old.

3. “To those *filled with pride* I say,
‘Let me no more *hear your boast.*’
I tell *them and all their host*
to *forsake their wicked way:*
‘Do not *proudly lift your horn;*
*neither speak with haughty scorn.*’”
4. Helpers will not from the east and not from the west appear to exalt and to revere him whom God makes last and least. He, the Judge of great renown, will lift up and will bring down.

5. From the chalice in his hand God himself pours out his wrath, heady wine that foams with froth. All the wicked in the land this most bitter cup of pain to the very dregs must drain.

6. As for me, my praise I shout; I give thanks to Jacob’s God. Him I will forever laud; I will let my joy ring out. All the wicked I will scorn, but God will exalt our horn.
1. God has in Judah spread his fame;
great is in Israel his name.
In Salem stands his tent of praise;
in Zion is his dwelling place.
There shield and sword no longer rattle:
he broke the weapons used in battle.

2. O God, more glorious is your might
than awe-inspiring mountain heights.
Men bold and warlike, stripped of spoil,
sank into sleep and ceased their toil.
None of the valiant and stout-hearted
could lift a hand; their plans were thwarted.

3. O Jacob’s God, at your rebuke
our enemies were terror-struck;
stunned lay both horse and charioteer.
You, you alone, evoke such fear.
Who does not stand in trepidation
before your wrath and indignation?
4. In fearful silence, all the earth heard how your verdict thundered forth when you, O God, in judgment rose to save the humble from their foes. All merely human wrath and fury will but increase your praise and glory.

5. Come, honour and revere the LORD; make vows to God and keep your word. Let all the nations tribute bring and fear him as almighty King, for he cuts off the breath of princes and sweeps away their proud pretences.
2. I remember God with weeping.
   He has kept my eyes from sleeping,
   and my spirit is so weak
   that I’m too distraught to speak.
   Through the night my thoughts in sadness
   turn to former days of gladness,
   to my songs of years gone by,
   and I in my sorrow sigh:

   “Will the Lord spurn us forever
   and withhold from us his favour?
   Will his love and mercy fail?
   Will his promise not prevail?
Will he not forgive transgression
but, forgetting his compassion,
let his burning wrath replace
his unfailing love and grace?”

4. Then I said, “This is what hurts me:
that the Most High God deserts me,
that I am from him estranged
now that his right hand has changed.”
Yet I will recall and ponder
all his awesome works of wonder,
meditating with delight
on his deeds so great in might.

5. All your ways, O strong Defender,
are most holy, great in splendour.
What god is there anywhere
who can with our God compare?
You worked wonders of salvation,
showed your power among the nations.
Your strong arm redeemed and freed
Jacob’s sons and Joseph’s seed.

6. Mighty waters writhed and trembled,
for they saw you and were humbled;
fear convulsed the hidden deep,
made the roaring billows leap.
Clouds poured rain, with thunder crashing,
and your arrows kept on flashing.
With the lightning bolts you hurled,
you lit up and shook the world.

7. Through the sea, where waves were tossing,
you laid bare a path for crossing.
Mighty waters fled in awe,
yet your footprints no man saw.
Your own people you there guided,
shepherds for your flock provided.
Moses, Aaron, by their hand
led them to the promised land.
1. Give ear, my people, listen as I teach you
and let the words of my instruction reach you.
The wisdom that on God’s decrees is found-
will be to you in parables expounded.
Their hidden truths I will for you unfold –
the things our fathers taught us from of old.

2. These we’ll pass on, not from their children hide them,
that those accounts of bygone days may guide them,
and we will tell the coming generation
how God has dealt with Israel, his nation –
the wondrous works the Lord for them has done,
the glory that his mighty hand has won.

3. To Israel he gave his revelation,
his law as Jacob’s ever-firm foundation,
and all our fathers he, the Lord, commanded
to make it known to those from them descended,
that also they might pass it on in turn
and teach his law to children not yet born.

4. Then they would put their trust in God their Saviour
and not forget his deeds of love and favour,
nor come to share their fathers’ condemnation,
that stubborn and rebellious generation
whose spirits were not faithful to the Lord,
by whom God was rejected and ignored.
5. The Ephraimites with bows for war assembled, yet they in battle all turned back and trembled. They did not keep God’s covenant but denied him, despised his law and shamelessly defied him, forgot what he had done for them alone, the miracles that he to them had shown.

6. God worked great marvels, and their fathers saw them; in Egypt’s land, in Zoan, wonders awed them. There he the waves for Israel divided and through the sea his chosen people guided. He made the water stand up like a heap; his mighty hand restrained the roaring deep.

7. By day he gave a cloud to lead and guide them; with fiery light did he all night provide them. Drink as abundant as the seas he gave them; he split the rocks, and springs welled up to save them. From barren crags he made fresh fountains burst, and rivers flowed to quench his people’s thirst.

8. God in the desert gave them his protection, yet they rebelled; his mercy met rejection. In sin and disobedience they persisted, and God Most High they boldly tried and tested. In stubborn pride, defiantly they raved, demanding from his hand the food they craved.

9. They slighted God and said, “Will he be able to spread us in the wilderness a table? He struck the rock, we saw the fountains gushing and streams of water through the desert rushing, but can he also give his people bread and bring us meat so that we will be fed?”

10. Therefore the Lord, who heard their provocation, was full of wrath against his chosen nation. His fiery rage against all Israel mounted; his anger rose, for never they recounted what he had done to help them in their plight; they did not trust his saving power and might.
12. The eastwind he called up from heaven’s borders, led forth the south wind to obey his orders, and on their wings they brought what God had given, for quails, like dust that by a storm is driven, rained down upon them from the darkened sky; then they had meat in plentiful supply.

13. They ate and were well filled with what they wanted; what they had craved, that he had freely granted. They gorged themselves, and while they celebrated, with food still in their mouth and greed unsated, God’s anger rose against them, and they died; he slew their strongest men, their flower and pride.

14. But still they sinned and did not cease to grieve him; despite his wonders they would not believe him. Their days he ended, and like fog they vanished; with sudden death and terror they were punished. But when he slew them, they would once again return to him, repenting of their sin.
15. Then they remembered God, their Rock and Saviour, the Most High God who with redeeming favour had brought them from the land that had enslaved them. They flattered him, yet thought that he would save them. Though with their lips they might fine words express, they scorned his covenant in their faithlessness.

16. Yet he in pity and in lovingkindness forgave them their iniquity and blindness, did not destroy them when his wrath was burning, but he restrained the anger they kept earning, remembering that they were but mortal men, a passing breeze that will not come again.

17. How often they would all rebel and leave him! How often they would in the desert grieve him! They kept on testing him, his love denying, the Holy One of Israel defy ing, and they forgot the glorious day when he redeemed his people from their enemy.

18. Through wondrous deeds he Israel delivered; he turned to blood all Egypt’s mighty rivers. By swarms of flies its people were tormented, and with a plague of frogs they were confronted. Their crops he to the hungry locust gave; their fields were left with nothing they could save.

19. With hail and sleet their vines and trees he shattered; their cattle he with bolts of lightning scattered. He loosed on them his wrath and indignation, brought them distress and widespread devastation. Destroying angels he among them sent, who brought great ruin everywhere they went.

20. Free rein he gave to his consuming anger; from death he did not spare them any longer but gave them up to plague and devastation. He in the tents of Ham brought desolation; their firstborn he struck down, and they all died – their eldest sons, all Egypt’s joy and pride.
22. Before them he drove out the heathen nations, apportioned to the tribes their habitations, and in their tents they safely found a dwelling. Yet they, against the Most High God rebelling, cast off his laws and him no longer served, and, like their fathers, from his ways they swerved.

23. They like a faulty bow, all warped and twisting, provoked God’s anger when, in sin persisting, they with their heathen worship made him jealous; in serving worthless idols they were zealous. Great was God’s wrath when he saw them rebel. He utterly rejected Israel.

24. From Shiloh’s tent, his dwelling, he departed, forsook those who were faithless and false-hearted. He to the clutches of the foe surrendered his holy ark, the symbol of his splendour. In anger that his word had been ignored, he gave his people over to the sword.
25. Their young men were consumed as flames drew near them; their maidens had no wedding songs to cheer them. Their priests fell by the sword of heathen nations; their widows could not voice their lamentations. The land was ravaged by the godless foe, and all endured great misery and woe.

26. He then turned back to those he had forsaken; as from deep slumber did the Lord awaken, just like a warrior who with wine is heated. He struck his foes until they all retreated, and as they fled, he at their backs took aim; he put them all to everlasting shame.

27. The tents of Joseph’s offspring he rejected, nor was his house in Ephraim erected. But he chose Judah’s tribe in his good pleasure – Mount Zion, which he loved, his pride and treasure. He built his temple like the heavenly heights, firm like the earth, enduring by his might.

28. He chose his servant David, and he crowned him; he took him from the sheepfolds where he found him. From tending ewes and newborn lambs he brought him; to make him Jacob’s shepherd, God had sought him. And David led his flock with skilful hand; with upright heart he governed all the land.
1. Your land, O God, the nations have invaded;
by heathen hordes your heritage was raided.
Look how they have, without restraint or pity,
defiled your temple and destroyed your city.
To carrion bird and beast
they've offered as a feast
the saints they led to slaughter;
around Jerusalem,
with none to bury them,
their blood was poured like water.
2. We are a taunt to those around us dwelling. When will you come, the enemy expelling? O hear us, LORD! Will you extinguish never your jealous anger? Will it burn forever? Your wrath, O LORD, pour out on all who your name flout. Consume the godless nations, for greedily have they seized Jacob as their prey and razed his habitation.

3. Do not recall the misdeeds of our fathers, nor hold their guilt against us, LORD, but rather show your compassion to your humbled nation and come with haste, O God of our salvation! O LORD, increase your fame, the glory of your name; free us from all oppression. Have mercy on your own; for your name's sake alone forgive us our transgression.

4. Why should the heathen, Israel deriding, ask in contempt, “Where may their God be hiding?” Arise, O Lord! Strike in retaliation; the blood of saints avenge before the nations! And may you from your throne hear how the prisoners groan. Your greatness manifesting, preserve us as of old. Repay them sevenfold who taunt you with their jesting.

5. We shall forever joyful praises render to you, O LORD, our Shepherd and Defender. We as your flock, your chosen congregation, shall give you thanks through every generation.
2. How long yet in your indignation will you ignore our supplication? Tears are the bread of Israel; you gave us tears to drink as well. You made us suffer strife and scorn, and we our neighbours’ jeers have borne.

3. LORD God of hosts, O come, restore us and cause your face to shine before us. From servitude in Egypt’s land you once brought out a vine to plant, that it might thrive for evermore where other nations dwelt before.
4. You cleared the ground for it to flourish; your vine took root and did not perish but filled the land so that its shade a shelter for the mountains made and, covering many mighty trees, spread to the River and the Sea.

5. Why did you break its walls asunder? All passers-by its grapes now plunder. Your vine is ravaged by the boar, and other beasts its fruit devour. Return, O God, and show your grace; look down from heaven, your dwelling place.

6. O God of hosts, grant preservation and save your vine from devastation. See how they in their savage ire have cut it down, burned it with fire. O let them perish in their fear when you with your rebuke appear.

7. But let your hand, so great in power, your aid and favour freely shower upon the man at your right hand and let him there beside you stand. You raised him up, the son of man, to work out your salvation’s plan.

8. O then we shall forsake you never! Revive us, and we shall forever call on your name, before you bow. LORD God of hosts, restore us now and cause your face to shine on us. LORD, save us in your faithfulness.
PSALM 81

For the director of music. According to gittith. Of Asaph.

Geneva, 1562

1. Sing a psalm of joy;
   shout with holy fervour.
   All your skills employ;
   with your heart and soul
   Ja-cob’s God ex-tol.
   He is our pre-serv-er.

2. O all Israel,
   voice your jubilation.
   Let your music swell;
   harp and timbrel play.
   Show in every way
   joy and exultation.

3. With the trumpet’s tune
   herald, in due season,
   feast-days of the moon.
   Let its echo sound.
   To let joy abound
   God gives every reason.

4. Keep by God’s command
   your commemoration.
   When in Egypt’s land
   captive Israel
   did in bondage dwell,
   he gave liberation.
5. “When you served as slaves of the ruthless Pharaoh, I, the God who saves, listened to your plea and I set you free from distress and sorrow.

6. “In the worst of plights comfort I provided. On Mount Sinai’s heights I gave you my law. You at Meribah tested were and guided.


8. “You shall not bow down showing veneration to mere gods of stone. You shall hate and flee the idolatry of the heathen nations.

9. “I, LORD God of truth, I from Egypt freed you. Open wide your mouth; put your trust in me. Know that I am he who will richly feed you.

10. “By their wilful choice they my love rejected; they ignored my voice. Israel did not heed what they were taught. They my law neglected.
12. “Then I would in haste
Israel deliver.
I would soon lay waste
the oppressor’s land
and with mighty hand
thwart the foe’s endeavour.

13. “As their just reward,
all the hostile nations
who despise the LORD
would before his face
cringe in their disgrace
and humiliation.

14. “With abundance I
Israel would nourish.
You I would supply
with the finest wheat,
honey pure and sweet.
Israel would flourish!”
1. In solemn court the “gods” assemble; before the Lord they stand and tremble. There in their midst he takes his place and they his righteous judgment face: “You judge unjustly. How much longer will you with falsehood rouse my anger? How long yet will you partial be to those whose wickedness you see?

2. “Defend the weak and the afflicted; ensure that orphans are protected. The rights of the oppressed maintain. Deliver them from wicked men. But, look, the poor are left forsaken; the order of the world is shaken. There is no justice, all are fools, and everywhere the darkness rules.
"You all are ‘gods,’ as I have told you; yes, sons of God Most High I’ve called you. But as mere mortals you will die, for you my just decrees defy. In spite of all your proud pretenses, you’ll fall like any other princes.”

O God, arise! The earth now judge:

all nations are your heritage!
1. God, be not silent, nor sit still!
   Stir up your might for Israel.
   For, look, your foes prepare for fighting;
   they raise their heads, for uniting.
   The flames of hated they keep fanning,
   your chosen people’s downfall planning.

2. They say, “Come, let us wipe them out;
   let Israel be put to rout.
   Let all their nation be defeated,
   its name from memory deleted.”
   They are with one accord conspiring,
   the fall of Israel desiring.

3. Look, Edom and the Ishmaelites,
   the Hagarenes and Moabites,
   with the Philistines and the Tyrians
   join Ammon’s tribe and the Assyrians;
   Gebal combines with Agag’s remnants.
   They give support to Lot’s descendants.

4. Treat them as you did Midian;
   as Sisera, that warrior slain
   when in a woman’s tent he sheltered;
   as those who at the Kishon faltered –
   all Jabin’s men, who, stripped of splendour,
   were dung left on the fields of Endor.
6. O God, make them like whirling dust,
like chaff before a windy gust.
As fire consumes the woods like tinder
and turns the hills to ash and cinder,
so with your storms, O God, subdue them;
with frightful hurricanes pursue them.

7. LORD, on their heads heap such great shame
that they will all confess your name.
May they be crushed and doomed forever;
in their disgrace let them discover
that you are LORD, uniquely glorious,
that you are everywhere victorious.
2. The sparrow finds a home to rest; the swallow builds herself a nest to rear her young beside your altar. Your temple is their safe abode, O Lord of hosts, my King, my God. How blest are those who there find shelter. Your house, O Lord, is their delight; they sing your praises day and night.
Psalm 84

3. How blest are those whose strength you are,
who seek the ways that from a-far
lead them to Zi-on’s ho-ly plac-es.
As they through Ba-ca’s val-ley pass,
they make that bar-ren wil-der-ness
a place of springs, a lush o-a-sis.
The ear-ly rain on it de-scends,
and pools re-fresh the de-sert sands.

4. They make their way from strength to strength
until in Zion they at length
appear before their God and Saviour.
LORD God Al-mighty, hear my plea;
O God of Jacob, an-swer me.
Bestow on me your grace and favour.
O God, our Shield, from heaven above
bless your anointed with your love.
5. **The Lord**, one day in your dwelling place
   is better than a thousand days
   outside the courts of your salvation.
   I would much rather stand and wait
   as humble servant at your gate,
   the threshold of your habitation,
   than, far from there, to dwell within
   the tents of wickedness and sin.

6. The **Lord** his goodness has revealed:
   he is to us a sun and shield.
   With grace and honour he delights us.
   He shows his mercy, as of old,
   and no good gift will he withhold
   from those whose walk is just and righteous.
   O **Lord** whose word is firm and true,
   how blest are those who trust in you.
2. LORD, will your blazing anger never cease?
Will it go on forever and increase?
Will you not once again our strength renew,
that all your people may rejoice in you?
Your never-failing love and mercy show
and your salvation, LORD, on us bestow.
To us your constant faithfulness unfold,
your lovingkindness as in days of old.
3. Let me now hear what God the Lord will speak, for to his saints who him in worship seek he will proclaim his peace and righteousness – but let them not to foolish ways regress. He surely with his saving help is near to those who serve him and his name revere, that in our land his glory may prevail and he may there among his people dwell.

4. Unfailing love meets constant faithfulness, while righteousness and peace embrace and kiss. Up from the ground true loyalty sprouts forth; down from the heavens justice views the earth. Rich blessings will the Lord on us bestow; with plenteous crops our land will overflow. Before him justice will its banner sway when for his footsteps it prepares the way.
2. You forgive us our transgressions
in your mercy and compassion;
you abound in love and grace.
In my woes I seek your face.
You, O LORD, will hear my pleading.
There’s no power yours exceeding.
You, O God, how great you are,
great your deeds beyond compare!

1. Turn to me, O LORD, and heed me;
see how poor I am, how needy.
I who serve you constantly
trust in you to rescue me.
Guard my life, show me your favour,
for you are my God and Saviour.
Lord, your servant’s joy renew,
for I lift my soul to you.

PSALM 86
A prayer of David.
Geneva, 1543/1551
3. All the nations will adore you; they will come and bow before you, bringing glory to your name, for none equals you in fame. Lord supreme in might and splendour, glorious are your works of wonder; glorious is your heavenly throne. You are God – yes, you alone.

4. Teach me, in your ways direct me; in your truth, O LORD, instruct me. Let it be my heart’s one aim to revere your holy name. Thankful for your grace and favour, I will praise your name forever. In your love you came to save me, your servant, from the grave.

5. See the proud pursue and hound me; those who seek my life surround me. They for you have no regard. But in you I trust, O Lord. You are rich in love and favour, slow to anger, patient ever; boundless is your faithfulness. Pity me in my distress.

6. Strengthen me in my affliction; grant your servant your protection. You whom I rely upon, rescue me, your handmaid’s son. Give me proof of your great favour; show my foes you are my Saviour. Shame them all and let them see how you help and comfort me.
2. What glorious things, O city of God’s favour, are said of you, proclaimed in joyful tone:
“I number Egypt, even Babylon, among all those who know me as their Saviour.

3. “The Cushite, the Philistine, and the Tyrian I will now in my register inscribe and say of every nation, every tribe, ‘This one was born within the walls of Zion.’”

4. It rightly will be said of God’s own city, “This one and that one were in Zion born, and as the Lord Most High himself has sworn, he will uphold her in his love and pity.”

5. This will the Lord write in the roll of nations: “These, born in Zion, all to me belong.” With joyful music they proclaim in song: “In Zion are the springs of my salvation.”
2. Like those descending to the pit,
I am among the dead forsaken.
My strength and vigour you have taken;
with misery I am beset.
Cut off, as from your presence banished,
I have from your remembrance vanished.

3. You plunged me deep into the grave,
and in the darkest pit I languish.
Your fury burdens me with anguish,
and you engulf me with your waves.
Of my close friends you have bereft me;
they shunned me and in horror left me.

4. As in a prison put away,
I have no prospect of escaping.
My eyes grow dim with grief and weeping.
Yet, LORD, to you I turn each day
and spread my hands in supplication
as I cry out for consolation.
6. But I cry out to you, O LORD; my prayer I offer every morning. O LORD, why do you keep on scorning my fervent pleas, as if unheard? Why do you cast me off and leave me? Why do you hide your face to grieve me?

7. From childhood I’ve been close to death, forlorn, afflicted, badly shaken, and by your terrors overtaken; my life is but a feeble breath. I am engulfed by your great fury; your onslaughts leave me weak and weary.

8. Your terrors like a mighty flood have overwhelmed and almost drowned me, and all day long they surge around me. You bring me bitter solitude. I’m shunned by those I loved so dearly; my closest friend is darkness dreary.
2. You said, “I’ve made a covenant with my chosen one; to David as my servant I my love have shown, for I to him have sworn, ‘Your offspring I will favour; I will establish your descendants’ reign forever. Your kingdom will endure, for I laid its foundations, and I will build your throne throughout all generations.’”

3. O LORD, the heavens extol the wonders of your ways; the holy ones in their assembly sing your praise. Who in their mighty host compares with you in splendour? They all before your throne to you their homage render. O LORD, who is like you? Who else has power unbounded? You are the mighty God by faithfulness surrounded.

4. You rule the swelling tides, the surging of the sea, and on the roaring waves impose tranquillity. Proud Rahab you have crushed, its carcass you have shattered; you with your mighty arm your enemies have scattered. Both earth and skies are yours, for yours is all creation; the world with all it holds you placed on its foundation.
6. Blest are the people who acclaim you as their King, who know the festal shout and of your mercy sing. They walk in radiant light, before your face rejoicing; the praises of your name they all day long keep voicing. Your wondrous deeds they laud, your righteousness recalling; they go their way with joy, your steadfast love extolling.

7. You are our strength and glory, you exalt our horn, and by your favour, LORD, our enemies we scorn. To you belongs our shield, our king so great and glorious; you, LORD, came to his aid and you made him victorious. To you our praise we sing, to you we homage render, O Israel’s Holy One, our powerful Defender.

8. Of old, you to the faithful in a vision said: “I have exalted him by whom you will be led; one of your own I have selected and appointed: my servant David, with my holy oil anointed. My arm will make him strong, my right hand will protect him. No foes will humble him, no wicked man afflict him.
9. “Before him I will go and crush his enemies.
   His horn I will exalt; my love will never cease.
   My name will be his strength; it will forsake him never,
   and I will set his hand on seas and mighty rivers.
   He will acknowledge me and cry in adoration,
   ‘My Father and my God, the Rock of my salvation!’

10. “I also will appoint him as my firstborn son,
    earth’s most exalted king, in fame surpassed by none.
    My steadfast love for him I will maintain forever;
    the covenant made with him I will not break or sever.
    In keeping with my pledge, the throne to David given
    will stand forever firm, enduring like the heavens.

11. “But should his sons forsake and disobey my law,
    ignoring my commands, not holding them in awe,
    then I will punish them, flog them for their transgression,
    but will not take from him my love and my compassion.
    My covenant will stand firm, my vow will not be broken,
    nor will I change a word of what my lips have spoken.

12. “I once for all have sworn by my own holiness.
    I will not break my word, but David I will bless;
    his throne will evermore from heir to heir be handed,
    for like the sun it will endure as I commanded.
    And like the moon, the faithful witness in the heavens,
    his reign will be secure. My promise I have given.”

13. But your anointed one you in your wrath have spurned;
    him you have now cast off, against him you have turned.
    The covenant made with him you have repudiated;
    his crown lies in the dust, defiled and violated.
    LORD, you have breached his walls, brought widespread
    devastation,
    reduced his citadels to scenes of desolation.

14. See how all passers-by have robbed and plundered him;
    he is his neighbours’ scorn, enduring bitter shame.
    The right hand of his foes you have in war exalted;
    they cheered in triumph when against him they revolted.
    His sword you have turned back, his enemies have felled him,
    and in his many battles you have not upheld him.
   O for what vanity have you created man!
   For who can live and see the light of day forever?
   Who can outwit the grave and meet its terrors never?
   Lord, where is now your love? Why has it waned and wavered?
   Where is the faithfulness that once you swore to David?

17. Remember how I bear within my heart, O Lord,
   the insults and the taunts that I have long endured.
   Your servant has been mocked and jeered by all the nations;
   foes taunted your anointed with their provocations.
   Yet praise and worship God! His mercy will not waver.
   Yes, Amen and Amen. Praised be the LORD forever!
Book IV
Psalms 90-106

PSALM 90
A prayer of Moses the man of God.

1. Lord, you have been for by-gone gen-er-a-tions
their dwel-ling place, their ha-ven of sal-va-tion.

Al-so for us you are the rock of a-ges,
our on-ly re-fruge when the tem-pest ra-ges,
and you in gen-er-a-tions yet to come
will be our chil-dren’s ev-er-last-ing home.

2. Before you for-med, O pow-erful Cre-a-tor,
the soar-ing moun-tains, all their peaks and cra-ters;
before you set the earth on its foun-dations
and made the world a place of habi-ta-tion,
from ever-last-ing stood your holy throne,
to ever-last-ing you are God alone.

3. You turn us back to dust when life is ended,
for so you in these very words com-manded:
“Return to dust, O mortals.” Thus we perish.
Brief is our life, and vain the things we cherish.
A thousand of our years are in your sight
a day gone by, a watch that ends the night.
Psalm 90

4. We’re swept away as by a mighty river.

Like fleeting dreams are we and our endeavour,

like tender grass that springs up in the morning,

un-fold and blossom in the early sun:

by evening they are shrivelled up and gone.

5. For we are all consumed by your great anger,
and we have seen your indignation linger.
You are with our iniquity acquainted;
your light reveals that all our deeds are tainted.
For in your wrath will all our days go by,
until our lives we finish with a sigh.

6. Our years are few: you seventy allow us,
or eighty if you with the strength endow us.
Throughout their span we in our sorrow languish;
the best of them are filled with toil and anguish.
They quickly pass until we reach the day
when life is over and we fly away.
7. Who feels your anger’s force, O God Almighty? Who knows how great it is and fears it rightly? Teach us that we our span of days may number; help us gain wisdom. LORD, your love remember! We for your mercy and compassion yearn. How long yet must we wait? O LORD, return!

8. O LORD, come in the morning and supply us with your unfailing love to satisfy us, that we may then rejoice and sing with gladness as many days as we have mourned in sadness, as many years as we have seen distress. Replace our grief with joy and happiness.

9. Make known to us your deeds of might and splendour, and may our children marvel at your grandeur. May you, O Lord, our gracious God and Saviour, bless us with all the riches of your favour. Establish all the labours of our hands; establish them, that to your praise they stand.
2. He’ll save you from the pestilence, 
his wings as shelter lending. 
His pinions are your sure defence, 
his truth a shield unbending. 
At night you will not fear the gloom, 
nor, during day, the arrow, 
nor havoc that may spread at noon, 
nor nights of plagues and sorrow.
3. A thousand at your side may fall,
but you’ll be safely guarded;
when tens of thousands die in all,
you’ll see the foe rewarded.
Since you the LORD your refuge made,
your rock and habitation,
no evil shall your tents invade,
nor plague and tribulation.

4. His hosts of angels God commands
for evermore to serve you.
They will support you on their hands
and from all danger swerve you,
lest ever you your foot should dash
against a stone, or stumble.
The deadly serpent you will crush;
the lion you will humble.

5. “Because he on my love relieves,
I surely will defend him.
He knows my name; thus, when he cries,
my answer I will send him.
I’ll come with rescue in the strife;
to him is honour owing.
I’ll bless him with great length of life,
to him salvation showing.”
1. It’s good with jubilation to praise and glorify your name, O LORD Most High, and thank you for salvation, at dawn in you rejoicing and in your steadfast love, at night the praises of your boundless mercy voicing.

2. With song and music blending, let me your praise recite; let harp and lute unite in harmony unending.
My thankfulness expressing, I praise your deeds of might;
I sing of my delight, your faithfulness confessing.

3. Your works are great and splendid. O how profound your thought!
The senseless fool cannot begin to understand it.
Though evil men may flourish, though like the grass they sprout,
LORD, you shall root them out. They shall forever perish.

4. You are supreme forever. Doomed is your enemy.
LORD, see the wicked flee, by none to be delivered!
With such great strength you bless me that, like the wild ox, I lift up my horn on high. The finest oils refresh me.

5. I have been vindicated! As my own eyes have seen,
my foes, to their chagrin, lie humbled and defeated.
The LORD is my salvation; their downfall is assured.
With my own ears I’ve heard their cries of desperation.

6. The just will he remember, to them his favour show;
they like the palm tree grow, like Lebanon’s fine timber.
Those whom the LORD will cherish within his house he plants.
There God his blessing grants: within his courts they flourish.
7. Still fruit in old age bearing, they fresh and green remain. Their witness makes it plain: the LORD is just and caring. His righteousness and favour they shall proclaim in song: “In him there is no wrong. He is my rock forever.”

PSALM 93

1. The LORD is King, en-robed in maj-es-ty;
he girds him-self with strength and eq-ui-ty.
Therefore the world, es-tab-lished by his hand,
can-not be moved but shall for-ev-er stand.

2. Firm from of old has stood, O LORD, your throne;
from everlasting you are God alone.
To you the seas have lifted up their voice,
the pounding waves that in their strength rejoice.

3. But mighty though the thundering floods may be,
far mightier than the breakers of the sea
is he, the LORD, who sits enthroned on high,
the King whose name we praise and glorify.

4. Your word stands firm, in your decrees we trust;
your statutes are dependable and just,
and holiness, O LORD whom we adore,
be-fits your house, now and for evermore.
2. How long yet will the evil doer exult and revel in his power?
   Hear how the wicked boast aloud; of all their misdeeds they are proud.
   They crush your people in their rage and they oppress your heritage.

3. When will you come as our avenger?
   They slay the widow and the stranger and put to death the fatherless;
   the poor and helpless they oppress.
   They say, “The Lord, he does not see.
   The God of Jacob, where is he?”

4. You fools who lack all comprehension, mark these my words and pay attention.
   When will you senseless ones be wise?
   Does he who fashioned ears and eyes not have the power to see and hear?
   Is he not one whom you should fear?
5. Does he who disciplines the nations not see your sins and provocations? Does he who teaches all mankind not probe the depths of every mind? The Lord well knows that in the end your thoughts are but a puff of wind.

6. Blessed is the man by you instructed and by your discipline corrected – the one to whom you teach your ways to grant relief in troubled days, till for the wicked, one and all, a pit is dug in which they fall.

7. God will not leave his own forsaken; his love is steadfast, never shaken. His people he again will bless with judgment based on righteousness, and all who have an upright heart will give his justice their support.

8. Who will, when wicked men attack me, be on my side, stand up and back me? Who will defend me in the strife when foes conspire to seek my life? Without God’s help I soon would have my dwelling in the silent grave.

9. When I cried out, “My foot is slipping,” you were at hand for my safekeeping, and in my great anxiety your steadfast love supported me. Whenever I on you would call, your consolation cheered my soul.

10. O Lord, can wicked rulers ever serve you as allies, gain your favour? They frame their mischief by decree and make of laws a mockery. They band together and consent to put to death the innocent.
The Lord is my defence and shelter,
my God the rock that will not falter.
Our enemies he will requite
for what was wicked in his sight.
All evil-doers he will rout;
the Lord our God will wipe them out.
2. The LORD our God, whose praise we sing, rules as our great and glorious King. None equals him, no god is greater. The deepest caves are in his hand; the mountains, all the seas, the land are his, for he is their Creator.

3. Come, let us worship and bow down before this God of great renown. Our Maker, him our thanks we render; he led us by his mighty hand to pastures in a verdant land. He is our shepherd, our defender.
5. For forty years they wearied me.
   I said, “They show no loyalty.
   Their hardened hearts resist my favour;
   my ways they foolishly ignore.”
   And so I in my anger swore:
   “Into my rest they’ll enter never.”

Psalm 95
1. Sing to the LORD with exultation.

O sing a new song, all creation.

Sing to the LORD and bless his name.

Day after day with joy proclaim
the wondrous deeds of his salvation.

2. Make known his glory to the nations;
declare to all their populations
his marvellous works, for he, the LORD,
is to be worshipped and adored.
Praise him with joyful exclamations.

3. All gods revered by other nations
are merely idols, man’s creation.
Our God made all the heavens’ extent,
and glory dwells within his tent.
Before him kneel in adoration.

4. Glory and strength, O tribes and nations,
attribute to God with exultation.
His power and majesty acclaim;
extol his great and glorious name.
Sing praise to him with jubilation.

5. Within his courts your offerings render
and worship him in holy splendour.
O all you nations, far and near,
tremble before him, quake with fear.
Bow down to him in awe and wonder.
7. In him rejoice, O heights of heaven.
Let earth be glad, to rapture driven.
Rejoice, O roaring sea’s domain;
exult, O fields of golden grain.
By rustling woods let praise be given.

8. Shout forth your gladness, all creation!
Sing to the LORD with exultation.
Behold, he comes! Your joy express!
He comes in truth and righteousness
to judge the earth and rule the nations.
1. The LORD our God is King!
Let earth re-joice and sing.
Let shores of dis-tant na-tions re-sound with ju-bi-la-tion.
Clouds dark with mys-ter-y en-fold his maj-es-ty.
He firm-ly based his throne on right-eous-ness a-lone.
Our glo-rious King is he.

2. Fire that consumes his foes
fiercely before him goes.
His thunderbolts are frightening:
the world’s lit up with lightning.
Earth trembles at the sight.
The mountains, great in height,
like wax all melt away
in terror and dismay
when God reveals his might.
4. Zion lifts her voice;
all Judah’s towns rejoice.
They heard the proclamation
of glorious vindication.
LORD, none with you compare,
for God Most High you are.
The earth is yours alone;
exalted is your throne,
supreme for evermore.
5. Let evil be abhorred by those who love the LORD. The faithful he will ever from wicked men deliver. Light dawns for the upright; in joy they will delight. You saints, rejoice in him and praise his holy name. Extol his glorious might!

PSALM 98

A psalm.

Geneva, 1543/1551

1. Sing to the LORD, a new song voicing,
   for mighty wonders he has done.
   His right hand and his arm most holy
   the victory for him have won.
   The LORD has blessed us with salvation;
   his righteousness has he made known.
   He has revealed to all the nations
   that justice issues from his throne.
3. Let all the earth with loud rejoicing 
burst into song to praise the LORD! 
With joyful blasts of horns and trumpets 
let him be worshipped and adored. 
Join in the praise and jubilation, 
make music with the harp, and sing! 
Shout forth your joy in celebration; 
come, praise the LORD, the mighty King.
4. Let seas and oceans roar and thunder. 
Praise God, all you who dwell on earth. 
Let rivers clap their hands rejoicing; 
let every mountain shout with mirth. 
He comes, he comes to rule the nations, 
and every wrong he will redress. 
The mighty God of our salvation 
will judge the world in righteousness.

PSALM 99

1. God, the LORD, is King, throned on cher-ub-im. 
Let the peo-ples quake, earth’s foun-da-tions shake, 
for in Zi-on he shows his maj-es-ty 
and his ex-al-ta-tion o-ver ev-ery na-tion.

2. Let them spread the fame of his awesome name; 
holy is the LORD and to be adored. 
Let them praise their King, of his justice sing. 
Worship him uprightly. He, the King, is mighty.

3. You in Jacob’s land have by your own hand 
right and truth maintained, equity ordained. 
At his footstool bow and revere him now. 
Praise him, high and lowly, for the LORD is holy.

4. Moses to him prayed, Aaron sought his aid; 
later Samuel called on him as well. 
They cried out to him, and he answered them, 
in all tribulation heard their supplication.
5. He to Is-rael spoke in a cloud of smoke; they his glo-ry saw, wor-shipped him with awe. He, their God and Shield, his com-mands re-vealed, which his cho-sen na-tion kept with ded-i-ca-tion.

6. You came to their aid when to you they prayed; you for-gave them then, though you pun-ished sin. Come to Zion’s hill and per-form God’s will; praise him, high and lowly, for the LORD is holy.

PSALM 100
A psalm. For giving thanks.

1. You lands and peo-ple-s of the earth, be-fore the LORD your joy shout forth. Serve him with glad-ness all your days and come to him with songs of praise.
2. Know that the **LORD** is God alone; he made us, and we are his own, the sheep that he to pasture leads and as their shepherd guards and feeds.

3. Come, enter then his gates with praise and in his courts your voices raise. Give thanks to him and bless his name; within his house your joy proclaim.

4. The **LORD** is good, and evermore his love and mercy will endure. All generations he will bless in his unchanging faithfulness.

**PSALM 101**

*Of David. A psalm.*

1. **LORD,** I will worship you with great rejoicing, my praise of righteousness and mercy voicing. Of steadfast love and justice I will sing to you, my King.

2. The path of blameless living I will ponder. When will you come to me, lest I should wander? I’ll walk within my house from sin apart, with upright heart.
Psalm 101

4. If one should secretly his neighbour slander, I will not fail to silence the offender. Proud hearts and haughty eyes I cannot bear and will not spare.

5. Those who are faithful, without guile or malice, I will appoint to serve me in my palace. No liar and no scandalmonger shall in my house dwell.

6. The wicked I will punish without pity, of evildoers rid God’s holy city, and I will rise to drive them all away day after day.
1. Heed my prayer, O LORD, be near me; turn your ear to me and hear me. In my woes and misery, do not hide your face from me; when I pray in grief and worry, LORD, to me your answer hurry. Listen to my lamentation; quickly come with consolation.

2. For my days, like smoke, have vanished, and my life will soon be finished. Like a hearth my bones all burn while I for your answer yearn. For my heart is so dejected that my bread I have neglected. While I groan, my strength is going; through my skin my bones are showing.
Psalm 102

3. While I lie awake in sorrow,
   I am like a lonely sparrow
   perch ing on a house-top high.

   Like a pelican am I,
   like an owl, whose habitation
   is a place of desolation.

   In my loneliness I languish,
   for I suffer constant anguish.

4. All day long my foes deride me;
   they with curses have defied me.
I no longer eat my bread,
but with ashes I am fed;
with my drink my tears are blended,
for your wrath has not yet ended.
You have cast me off in fury
and have left me sad and weary.
5. Like an evening shadow, fleeting, swiftly its brief span completing, so my days all quickly pass, for I wither like the grass. But you, LORD, enthroned forever, are the one who changes never; every passing generation sees your glorious exaltation.

6. LORD, you will arise in pity on your house and holy city. It is time to show your face, the appointed time for grace. You will hear our supplication when we pray for restoration. Those who serve you, LORD, sincerely love the stones of Zion dearly.

7. All the nations will revere you; all the kings of earth will fear you, for your city you shall build, to be with your glory filled. You will set your congregation firm on Zion’s strong foundation. When we pray, LORD, you will hear us; when we suffer, you are near us.

8. May a future generation praise the LORD for such salvation: “He looked down from heaven on high to release those doomed to die!” So in Zion, in his dwelling, all will praise his love unfailing when the peoples there adore him and the kingdoms kneel before him.
10. Mighty God of all creation, 
you have laid the earth’s foundation, 
and you framed the vast extent 
of the spacious firmament. 
But they both will fall and tumble; 
what may seem secure will crumble. 
Like a garment one may cherish, 
so will they wear out and perish.
11. Like a cloak, your whole creation, from the skies to earth’s foundation, will be changed and cast aside, but you evermore abide. LORD, the children of your servants, all the line of their descendants, will in safety dwell before you, for your steadfast love adore you.

**PSALM 103**

*Of David.*

1. O bless the LORD, my soul, bless your preserver!

My inmost being, praise his name with fervour.

Do not forget his deeds of love and grace.

O bless the LORD, who pardons your transgressions, who heals your illnesses in his compassion, and who redeems your life from death’s abyss.

2. O bless the LORD, who with his mercy crowns you, who with his love and faithfulness surrounds you, who grants his bounteous gifts your whole life through. To him who shows his righteousness, sing praises; from their affliction he his people raises. Your youth he, like the eagle’s, will renew.
Psalm 103

3. To the oppressed his justice he discloses.

His ways he long ago revealed to Moses;
his deeds he has to Israel made known.

Great is his love! The Lord is slow to anger.

He will not let his wrath forever linger
and will not endlessly accuse his own.

4. The Lord has dealt with us in great compassion,
not punished us according to transgression.
High as the vault of heaven, without end,
so great his mercy is to those who fear him;
he sweeps the sins of all those who revere him
as far away as east from west extends.

5. In tender mercy, like that of a father
who has compassion on his sons and daughters,
God looks on those who put in him their trust.
On all who fear him, he will have compassion,
for well he knows how we were formed and fashioned;
the Lord remembers that we’re only dust.

6. Life is like grass, so quick to fade and perish,
or like a flower that will but briefly flourish,
that withers in the blowing wind;
soon it is gone, not leaving any traces.
But God is ever merciful and gracious:
his love stands firm, abiding without end.
7. God’s mercy, everlasting and unfailing, his righteousness, for evermore prevailing, will rest on those who worship him with awe. God will be faithful through the generations to children’s children who with dedication uphold his covenant and obey his laws.

8. His holy throne the LORD in heaven has founded; from there he rules with sovereign power unbounded, for all the universe is his domain. Praise him, you angels, great in might and splendour. You loyal servants, in your awe and wonder shout forth the praise of his eternal reign!

9. You hosts of angels, worship and adore him. All you who serve and minister before him, his justice and his majesty extol! Let all created things in glad communion exalt his name throughout his vast dominion. Come, praise the LORD and bless him, O my soul!
2. The earth, which you have founded, none can shake.
The raging deep you as its cloak did make,
and even mountains were concealed thereunder;
the waters fled at your rebuke, your thunder.
They down the hills their way to valleys found;
the mighty waters you with limits bound.
So you assigned their place to them, that never their roaring floods the earth again might cover.

1. O bless the Lord, my soul, and praise his name.

O Lord, how great you are, how bright your fame!
You who are clothed in majesty and splendour,
enrobed in light, to you my praise I render.
The heavens you have stretched out like a tent,
your palace founded on the firmament.
Clouds are your chariots, storms lend you their pinions;
winds are your heralds, fire and flame your minions.

PSALM 104

Geneva, 1542/1543
3. You, LORD, let water gush from springs and wells; it flows in valleys in among the hills. You quench the thirst of every creature living, to roaming beasts refreshing waters giving. There by the riverside nest many birds; among the branches is their singing heard. From your high halls you water all the mountains; you bless the earth from overflowing fountains.

4. For cattle you cause grass to sprout and grow, and you to man give plants to reap and sow. You in his bread and wine let him take pleasure; in oil of joy, supplied in richest measure. On cedars that you planted rains pour down; well watered are the trees of Lebanon. There dwells the stork with birds of every feather; goats roam the rocky crags where coney gather.

5. To mark the seasons you, LORD, made the moon. At your command the sun turns dusk to noon, and when the day by night is overtaken, then in the forest all the beasts awaken. Young lions roar and seek from God their prey, but when the dawn appears, they steal away and in their dens lie down, the sunlight scorning. Man then awakes and greets the dewy morning.

6. Off to his work man goes when morning calls and labourstills the evening shadow falls. O LORD, your many glorious works astound us. In wisdom you made everything around us; its fullness earth to you as tribute brings. Your ocean teems with countless living things. There sail the ships in coming and in going; there plays Leviathan, its pleasure showing.
8. **For evermore God’s radiant glory stands;**
may he rejoice in **all that** he commands.
He *looks at earth and makes it shake* and shiver;
he touches mountains, *and they smoke and quiver.*
God *I will* praise as **long as I shall live;**
may to the **LORD** my worship pleasure give.
But **may the wicked from the earth be driven.**
Bless God, my soul! To him all praise be given.
2. Turn to the LORD, who fails us never, and seek his face, his strength, forever. Recall the wonders he has wrought, the righteous judgments he has taught. Remember these, you chosen ones, O Abraham’s offspring, Jacob’s sons.

3. He is the LORD, our God unfailing, his judgments everywhere prevailing. He will remember and uphold his covenant made in days of old. The steadfast words of his command a thousand generations stand.

4. Firm stands his word to Abraham spoken, his oath to Isaac, never broken. His everlasting covenant the LORD our God will not recant. He promised Israel, “You I’ll give the land where you as heirs may live.”
6. Where Jacob dwelt among the nations, 
   God summoned famine and starvation, 
   destroying every source of bread. 
   But he had sent a man ahead, 
   that he his chosen ones might save. 
   This man was Joseph, sold as slave.

7. In Egypt he endured great anguish; 
   in prison he was left to languish. 
   His feet were bruised, with shackles chained; 
   his neck in irons long remained. 
   But when the LORD’s word proved him right, 
   he was delivered from this plight.

8. The king called Joseph and released him; 
   his prophecies and counsel pleased him. 
   He made him master of the land, 
   gave all he had into his hand, 
   to guide his princes on their course, 
   to show his elders wisdom’s source.
9. Then Israel with kin and cattle went down to Egypt there to settle. Rich blessings did the LORD bestow; soon they were stronger than their foe. Then God made the Egyptians treat his chosen servants with deceit.

10. The LORD sent Moses as their saviour with Aaron, whom he chose to favour, and through their words he wrought for them great wonders in the land of Ham. Though darkness covered it by day, the foe would not God’s word obey.

11. To blood he turned both stream and river. He all their land to frogs delivered; they into inner chambers went. Then swarming flies and gnats he sent. Their fields and orchards hailstorms lashed; throughout the land the lightning flashed.

12. Their fig trees and their vines were shattered, their fields by swarms of locusts battered, which ate their crops and all things green till only barren ground was seen. Then God in anger raised his hand and smote the firstborn in the land.

13. With silver and with gold provided, they went, by God their shepherd guided. How glad was Egypt when they left; of all its pride it was bereft. God spread a cloud and gave a light to point the way by day and night.

14. He gave them quail as they demanded, and bread from heaven on them descended. Out of the rock God’s mighty hand made rivers flow in desert land. His promise, made to Abraham, he kept and safely guided them.
Psalm 105

15. God led them forth with joy and singing,
their voices with his praises ringing.
He gave to them the nations’ land,
filled with their fruit his people’s hand,
that they might serve him all their days.
O Israel, to the Lord give praise.
2. When you deliver Israel,
O LORD, remember me as well.
Come to my aid and show your favour,
that with your flock I may engage
in praising you, O gracious Giver,
and glory with your heritage.

3. We, as our fathers did before,
have done what you, O LORD, abhor;
we all are guilty of transgression.
Your chosen ones in Egypt’s land
forgot your kindness and compassion,
ignored the wonders of your hand.

4. Though at the Red Sea they rebelled,
with mighty hand he them upheld
and for his name’s sake aid provided.
At his rebuke the waters fled;
his own, as through a desert guided,
were through the deep to safety led.
6. His mighty works they soon forgot; his counsel they no longer sought but him with lustful cravings taunted. His people boldly challenged him, and so he gave them all they wanted but sent a plague to punish them.

7. Some in their pride and envy rose God’s chosen leaders to oppose. The earth then opened up and swallowed all who with Dathan had conspired and who Abiram’s lead had followed. The wicked perished in the fire.

8. At Horeb’s mount a calf they made and to a metal image prayed; for this they traded God’s great splendour, the glory nothing can surpass. They, scorning him, their great defender, revered a bull that feeds on grass.
9. Their God and Saviour they forgot, who wondrous things for them had wrought, astounding Egypt by his power; whose deeds of might and majesty caused all the land of Ham to cower, struck them with terror by the sea.

10. His people he would then have slain, for they continued to complain, but Moses, whom he greatly favoured, stood in the breach, confronting him. So they were from God’s wrath delivered, from the destruction threatening them.

11. Then they despised the pleasant land, bestowed on them by God’s own hand. His steadfast promise not believing, they sulked and grumbled in their tents. God with their disobedience grieving, they stubbornly would not repent.

12. He swore that he would slay them all, that in the desert they would fall because of all their provocations, and that their sons at his command would be dispersed among the nations and scattered over all the lands.

13. By Baal-Peor’s lure misled, they ate from offerings for the dead, and so provoked the LORD to anger. He saw their deeds; his wrath arose. He let a plague among them linger because they lifeless idols chose.

14. Then Phinehas rose to intervene; the plague was stopped when God had seen how, acting with determination, he put an end to wickedness. Thus he for endless generations was credited with righteousness.
They dis obeyed the LORD’s command
to slay the peoples of the land,
but, mingling with the heathen nations,
they learned their wicked customs there,
served Canaan’s vain abominations;
its gods became for them a snare.

To heathen wickedness enticed,
they to the demons sacrificed
their own beloved sons and daughters,
poured out their children’s guiltless blood.
They sought by such abhorrent slaughter
to satisfy some pagan god.

To Canaan’s idols, gods of vice,
they gave their sons as sacrifice;
the land was with their blood polluted.
God’s chosen people openly
themselves defiled and prostituted
by unclean acts for all to see.
19. Therefore the LORD stood up in rage and he abhorred his heritage. He turned them over to the nations; to slavery did the LORD condemn those who had roused his indignation. Their enemies ruled over them.

20. Time after time he set them free, though they refused to bow their knee; bent on rebellion, they defied him. They sank into iniquity; God made their enemies deride them till they lamented bitterly.

21. Then he took note of their distress; he heard their cry and gave redress. God in his steadfast love relented; no longer did he those condemn who of their evil had repented. He caused their foes to pity them.

22. Save us, O LORD our God, we pray; bring back your people gone astray, and take us from among the nations, that to your great and holy name we may give thanks with jubilation and glory in your wondrous fame.

23. Blest be the God of Israel, whose deeds in majesty excel. Extol his holy name forever; let never-ending praise ring out. Blest be the LORD who fails us never. Let all the people “Amen!” shout.
2. Let all this be repeated; let those whom he set free retell how he defeated their fiercest enemy. He gave them peace and rest. In far-off lands he sought them; from east as well as west, from north and south he brought them.
3. Some, wandering in waste places, found nowhere they could stay. God heard them and was gracious; he led them on their way. With thirst and hunger weak, they cried to God to save them from deserts dry and bleak. A place of rest he gave them.

4. God led them to a city where they could safely dwell; he showed them love and pity. Let them his wonders tell, and let their anthems rise. His steadfast love relieves them. Their thirst he satisfies; no more their hunger grieves them.

5. Some, chained in gloomy prisons, endured his anger’s rod. They had rebelled and risen against the words of God. His counsel they had spurned, the Most High’s voice neglected. In vain for help they yearned; they were by all rejected.

6. They cried to God to save them; he broke their shackles all and liberty he gave them; the gloom did he dispel. Let them God’s love adore and at his marvels wonder; he shatters great bronze doors, snaps iron bars asunder.
7. Some were with illness stricken
because of sin and guilt.
All food caused them to sicken;
they were with loathing filled.
Close to death's gates they came,
and there were none to cheer them.
Then in their grief and shame
they cried, and God did hear them.

8. To them his word revealing,
he came with power to save,
stretched out his hand of healing
and snatched them from the grave.
Let them all thank the LORD,
their sacrifices bringing,
and his great deeds record
with joyful shouts and singing.
9. Some who in ships were sailing the ocean’s mighty sweep saw there God’s power prevailing in wonders of the deep. The tempest, when he spoke, caused waves to rise like mountains that roared and fell and broke into wild, foaming fountains.

10. They were distressed and humbled; their courage ebbed away. Like drunken men they stumbled in terror and dismay. The LORD saw their despair, and when to him they shouted, he heard their fervent prayer; the raging storm he routed.

11. The LORD, their fears allaying, bade storm and wind be still; hushed were the waves, obeying their Maker’s word and will. How happy were the men when he the calm provided and he their ship again to longed-for havens guided.

12. Let all then thank their Saviour with shouts of joyful praise, extol his love and favour, shown in such wondrous ways. Let them break out in song within their congregation. Let him be praised among the elders of the nation.
13. In dry land he changes
the fields where streams abound.

Clear springs and verdant ranges
he turns to thirsty ground.

To salty wastes he turned
a land of fruit and flower
because its people spurned
his words of truth and power.

14. Into cool streams he changes
a thirsty desert land.
In parched and barren ranges
flow springs at his command.
There he reveals his grace,
shows hungry ones his pity,
allows them in that place
to build themselves a city.
15. He grants them fields for sowing and vineyards to prepare; in harvests overflowing they see God’s wondrous care. His favour does not cease; their garners they replenish. In number they increase; their herds do not diminish.

16. God pours contempt on princes when they his own oppress, drives them with their pretences into the wilderness. He, lifting them from woe, his people does remember; like flocks their families grow, for he adds to their number.

17. The upright with elation God’s mighty works acclaim; the wicked of all nations are silent, put to shame. Let then the wise regard all this with awe and wonder, and, turning to the LORD, let them his mercy ponder.
PSALM 108

A song. A psalm of David.

Geneva, 1562

1. My heart is steadfast, O my God.
   Your mercy I will ever laud;
   your name I will in song exalt,
   make melody with all my soul.

   A-wake, O harp and lyre, a-wake,
   for I will urge the dawn to break.

   I’ll sing your glory to the nations,
   your praise among their populations.

2. Great is, O God, your steadfast love,
   far higher than the heavens above.
   Your faithfulness soars to the skies.
   Above the heavens, O God, arise;
   reveal your splendour and shine forth
   your glory over all the earth.
   Now show your might and save your nation;
   to those you love, grant liberation.
3. Our mighty King, the God of grace, has spoken in his holy place: “All Succoth’s vale and Shechem’s land I will divide as I have planned. All Gilead belongs to me; Manasseh is my property. My helmet: Ephraim, strong defender. My sceptre: Judah, firm commander.

4. God shamed his foes with words that sting: “At Edom I my sandal fling; I Moab as my washbowl claim and in Philistia shout my fame.” God, who but you can be our guide to Edom, so well fortified? But you have cast us off in anger and with our armies march no longer.

5. To us again your favour show; grant us your aid against the foe. Uphold us as none other can, for worthless is the help of man. Our God will crush the enemy; with him, we’ll gain the victory. Our proud oppressors he will humble, tread on their necks and make them tremble.
PSALM 109

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

1. God, whom I praise and love sincerely,
do not stay silent. O LORD, hear me,
for wicked mouths, your word defy-ing,
frame with their lips deceit and lying.
Though not deserv-ing ill or threat,
I am with words of hate beset.

2. They rave and without cause abuse me
and, in return for love, accuse me.
I pray for all who have abhorred me;
with evil they for good reward me.
You see this, LORD, from heaven above;
with hatred they repay my love.

3. Appoint a wicked man to seize him.
Let his accuser not release him;
to him be guilt and blame awarded.
His prayers be all as sin regarded.
His days be few, and in disgrace
may he to others yield his place.

4. His wife be widowed and neglected;
his children orphaned, unprotected.
And when they beg, let nought be given;
they from their ruined homes be driven.
May creditors his goods all seize;
may strangers plunder what they please.
5. May he be exiled from his city, none show his children any pity. May his posterity be banished, cut off, until his name has vanished; his father’s and his mother’s sin, let it before the LORD remain.

6. May it be always recollected that he mistreated the afflicted, that to the destitute he never showed any kindness, any favour; the poor and broken-hearted he chased to their death, relentlessly.

7. He loved to curse – may curses press him. He scoffed at blessings – may none bless him. He like a mantle wore his cursing, his evil and his hatred nursing. May all the ills he did and spoke like oil into his body soak.

8. His cursing be a cloak around him, a belt that with his guilt has bound him. May all who without cause accuse me and speak their evil to abuse me receive such payment from the LORD as their appropriate reward.

9. But you, O LORD, my God and Saviour, for your name’s sake, show me your favour! Good is your love, great your compassion; deliver me love from all oppression, for I am poor and need support, and deeply wounded is my heart.

10. A fading shadow, disregarded; a locust, shaken off, discarded – these do I in my woe resemble. My knees, through fasting weakened, tremble. I’m skin and bones, all strength has fled, and those who taunt me shake their head.
11. O help me, Lord my God, and hear me.
In your un-fail-ing love, be near me.
Save me, your prom-i-ses re-new-ing,
and show them that it is your do-ing.

LORD, they may curse, but you will bless;
you’ll save me in your right-eous-ness.

12. LORD, put to shame those who attack me
and with their taunts torment and mock me;
but may your servant sing with gladness,
saved by your hand from grief and sadness.
Dishonour my accusers’ name
and wrap them in a cloak of shame.

13. I’ll thank the LORD for his salvation
and praise him in the congregation.
He stands beside all those who suffer;
his help and comfort he will offer.
Though foes the poor to death condemn,
the LORD himself will rescue them.
1. The Lord unto my Lord these words has spoken:

“Be seated on the throne at my right hand

till I the power of your foes have broken,

and you upon their necks your foot shall plant.”

2. To you the Lord will send forth out of Zion
the sceptre of authority and might.
Amidst your enemies show your dominion
and rule them by your own God-given right.

3. Your people will be wholly glad and willing
when you to your great battle summon them.
Your youth will come, as dew when day is dawning;
arrayed in holiness are your young men.

4. The Lord has sworn an oath he will not sever:
“After the order of Melchizedek
you are a priest, a priest to me forever.”
He gave his word and will not take it back.

5. The Lord is at your right hand; he will scatter
kings who oppose him on his day of wrath;
all nations he as judge will slay and shatter,
and he will crush whoever blocks his path.

6. From wayside brooks he’ll drink refreshing water;
in his campaign he will not fail or fall.
His enemies will never make him falter;
he will lift up his head and rule them all.
1. O give the LORD whole-hearted praise!

In thankful song my voice I raise

within the righteous congregation.

Great are the doings of the LORD,

and all to whom they joy afford

will study them with dedication.

2. In majesty and glory stand
the works of his almighty hand.
His righteousness endures forever.
He caused his wondrous acts to be
preserved in thought and memory;
his love and mercy will not waver.

3. The LORD gives food with open hand
to all who honour his command;
he keeps his covenant obligations.
His mighty deeds has he made known:
he gave his people, as their own,
the heritage of heathen nations.

4. The wondrous works his hands have done
are just and faithful, every one;
his precepts all will stand unshaken.
They will endure eternally;
secure and firm is all that he
has in uprightness undertaken.
5. To Israel he redemption sent;
eternal is God’s covenant.
His holy name is all-surpassing.
The fear of God is wisdom’s source,
a light to all who walk its course.
His glorious praise is everlasting!

PSALM 112

1. Come, praise the LORD! Let all revere him.
How blessed is the man who fears him,
who in the LORD’s commands takes pleasure.
His offspring, blest in equal measure,
will be the mighty in the nation,
a truly upright generation.

2. Abundant riches fill his dwelling;
firm stands his justice, never failing.
As after night comes morning brightness,
light dawns for him who loves uprightness;
all gloom and darkness it displaces
for the compassionate and gracious.
Psalm 112

3. All’s well with him whose generous lending

gives joy to those on him depending;

who, his trust-worthiness revealing,

lets justice govern all his dealings.

The righteous one shall never waver;

his praises will be sung forever.

4. With steadfast heart in God confiding,

he has no fear of evil tidings;

he in the end with exultation

will greet his foe’s humiliation.

His gifts he on the poor will shower;

great are his honour and his power.

5. The just will thrive in his endeavours;

his righteousness endures forever.

The wicked sees it with vexation;

his teeth he gnashes in frustration.

The schemes and hopes that he may cherish

are sure to fail and doomed to perish.
1. Come, praise the LORD! His might acclaim!
Let all his servants praise his name;
both now and evermore adore him.
From where the sun begins to rise
to where it sets in western skies,
let all with praises come before him.

2. God far above all nations dwells;
his glory heavenly heights excels,
for who compares in might and splendour
with him, the LORD, who from his throne
on earth and on the heavens looks down?
Let all to him their praises render.

3. God saves the needy from disgrace
and lifts them to an honoured place
among the princes of his nation.
His favour makes the barren spouse
a joyful mother in her house.
Praised be the LORD with exultation.
2. The waves rolled back, the sea fled at the sight, the Jordan turned its waters back in fright; dread came on all creation. The mountains quaked and skipped like frightened rams; the hills jumped up and shook like shivering lambs in fear and consternation.

3. Why was it that you ran away, O sea? O Jordan, why did you turn back and flee? Why all this consternation? Why, mountains, did you skip like frightened rams? And hills, what made you shake like shivering lambs with fear and trepidation?

4. Before the Lord, O earth, tremble in fear, as when the God of Jacob once drew near on Horeb’s holy mountain. He turned the rock into a sparkling stream; the granite cliffs he made with cascades gleam from newborn spring and fountain.
2. Our God, enthroned on heaven’s cherubim, will bring to pass whatever pleases him. The idols of the nations, though skilful works of silver and of gold, are merely things that hands of men did mould into abominations.

3. Though they have mouths, they cannot make a sound. Their eyes are blind: they cannot look around at any sacrifices. They may have ears, but they can never hear; their nostrils cannot smell though men draw near with frankincense and spices.

4. Though they have hands, they cannot touch or feel, and at dead feet do their adorers kneel. Though precious stones encrust them, yet from their mouths no words can ever come. Their makers will, like them, grow deaf and dumb, and so will all who trust them.
6. The \textit{LORD} will not forget \textit{us} but \textit{will} bless all who in \textit{him} alone their faith confess with \textit{thanks} for all \textit{he} gave \textit{them}. On Aaron’s house and \textit{on} his \textit{Israel}, on \textit{all} who fear \textit{him} \textit{will} \textit{his} blessings \textit{dwell}; both \textit{small} and \textit{great}, \textit{he} saves \textit{them}.

7. May \textit{he}, the \textit{LORD}, give you a rich \textit{increase}, you and your \textit{children} \textit{with his} bounties \textit{please}. May \textit{God} \textit{bless} \textit{you} \textit{from} heaven; he \textit{shaped} creation as he \textit{brought} it forth. To \textit{him} \textit{belong} the heavens, \textit{but the} earth the \textit{LORD} \textit{to man has} \textit{given}.

8. The \textit{dead} cannot in \textit{God the L ORD} \textit{rejoice}; \textit{those} who \textit{go down} to silence \textit{cannot} voice a \textit{new song} to revere \textit{him}. But \textit{we will} bless the \textit{LORD for evermore}, from \textit{this time} forth \textit{and always} \textit{him} \textit{adore}. Praise then the \textit{LORD} and \textit{fear} \textit{him}.
2. The cords of death held me in deep despair; great was my anguish when they tightly bound me. The torments of the grave were all around me. In my distress I turned to God in prayer.

3. I cried to him, “Deliver me, O LORD! Preserve my life, O faithful God and Saviour.” The LORD is just; he shows his grace and favour. In his compassion he fulfils his word.

4. To helpless ones the LORD a shield will be; he rescued me from peril and affliction. Come, O my soul, find rest in his protection. God in his mercy has been good to me.

5. LORD, you have saved my soul from death’s abyss. My tears you’ve dried; my feet you’ve safely guided, kept them from stumbling. Grace you have provided, that I may live to walk before your face.

6. I kept my faith, and therefore did I speak when I was made to suffer tribulation; I said in haste and bitter consternation: “All men are false, and guileful ways they seek.”
7. What shall I render to my Saviour now for all the riches of his consolation?
   I will lift up the cup of his salvation and call upon his name with thankful vow.

8. In all his people’s presence I will pay my vows to him, the LORD so good and gracious. To God the death of all his saints is precious; in times of grief he is their help and stay.

9. I am, O LORD, your servant, bound yet free, your humble slave, whose shackles you have broken. I’ll offer you my sacrifice as token of thankfulness, and praise you constantly.

10. Before God’s people, O Jerusalem, right in your midst, within his habitation, I shall fulfil my vows with jubilation. Shout hallelujah! Zion, praise his name!
Come, all you nations, praise the LORD!

Exalt him all with one accord.

Great is his steadfast love toward us;
en-during is his faithfulness.

All peoples, in the LORD rejoice

and praise his name with heart and voice.
1. Come, thank the Lord, his goodness praising;
   his firm and steadfast love endures.

O Israel, O house of Aaron,
proclaim his love forever sure.

Let all who come to him in worship
be in his steadfast love secure.

Come to the Lord with your thanks-giving;
for ever-more his love endures.

2. To God I cried in my affliction;
he answered me and set me free. The Lord himself is my protection;
what can mere mortals do to me?
On all my foes I look in triumph;
with God I face them fearlessly.
I put no confidence in princes;
the Lord, he shall my refuge be.
3.  I was surrounded by all nations,
but I subdued them in his name;
and though they swarmed like bees around me,
I beat them down like thorns aflame.
I nearly fell when they attacked me;
to my support the LORD then came.
He is my song and my salvation;
his strength is evermore the same.

4.  Hear in the dwellings of the righteous
their shouts of joy and victory:
“The LORD’s right hand is strong and mighty;
he lifts it up triumphantly.”
I shall not die, but live and praise him;
in song his deeds my theme shall be,
for he who chastened me severely
has not to death surrendered me.

5.  Let me now thank the LORD my Saviour;
unlock the gates of righteousness,
for this is where the righteous enter;
the gateway to the LORD it is.
I thank you, LORD, for you have heard me
and answered me in my distress.
You are the rock of my salvation;
with all my heart your name I bless.

6.  The stone the builders had rejected
was chosen as the cornerstone.
To us a marvel unexpected,
it is the work of God alone.
This is the day he has created;
now let us sing with joyful tone.
Hosanna, LORD! Cause us to prosper.
LORD, bless all those who are your own.
Blest he who in the LORD’s name enters;
we bless you from his dwelling place.
The LORD is God; he shines upon us
the glorious brightness of his face.
Come, join the jubilant procession;
with boughs in hand, your voices raise.
Bind festal offerings to the altar
and worship him with shouts of praise.

8. You are my God, and I will praise you,
my rock and refuge, firm and sure.
You are my God; I will extol you,
for in your love I am secure.
Come to the LORD with your thanksgiving;
with joyful anthems him adore.
O thank the LORD for all his goodness;
his love endures for evermore.
1. How blessed are those upright in their way, who keep the Lord’s decrees with dedication and in their walk of life his law obey.

2. How blessed are they who shun iniquities, your holy law with diligence observing. You have laid down your statutes and decrees, to be obeyed in faithfulness unswerving. O may I but submit myself to these and so go forth, a steady course preserving.

3. I know that I shall not be put to shame if only with attention undivided I heed your laws and fix my gaze on them. I truly thank you for the grace provided when I am taught the judgments you proclaim. Do not forsake me, leaving me unguided.
5. Your words have I laid up within my heart; I keep your faithful promise as my treasure, lest I should ever from your ways depart. O LORD, how blest you are beyond all measure. Your statutes and decrees to me impart, for in your law I find my greatest pleasure.

6. In your commandments I take great delight; I turn to them in thoughtful meditation. The path marked by your law I keep in sight to guard myself against all deviation. Your statutes I will not neglect or slight; your word I praise with joy and exultation.

7. Do good to me so that my life may be devoted to your words in all their splendour. Open my eyes, that I may clearly see
your perfect law and gaze upon its wonders.
Do not, O LORD, hide your commands from me,
who here on earth but as a pilgrim wander.

8. By night and day for your decrees I long;
my aching heart consumes itself with yearning.
The haughty you rebuke for all their wrongs –
those cursèd ones: your laws they keep on spurning.
LORD, set me free from their insulting tongues,
for I have kept your law, your will discerning.

9. Though rulers may together scheme and plot,
against me their conspiracies devising,
I contemplate the precepts you have taught;
I study them, your testimonies prizing.
In your instruction my delight I’ve sought,
and in the counsel from your law arising.

7 Daleth

10. See how my soul is cleaving to the dust;
renew my life and grant me restoration.
I told you of my ways, for you I trust;
you in your mercy heard my supplication.
Teach me your statutes, excellent and just;
then shall your wonders be my meditation.

11. My weary soul in sorrow pines away;
true to your promise, comfort and restore me.
LORD, let me not in ways of falsehood stray
but through your precepts of your love assure me.
Your statutes I have chosen to obey;
your righteous judgments I have set before me.

12. In your decrees I place my steadfast hope;
I cling to them, on your great love depending.
LORD, put me not to shame but lift me up
and show to me your faithfulness unending.
Along the path of truth I run and leap,
for your commands enlarge my understanding.
Psalm 119

13. Teach me your statutes, LORD, and to the end I will obey them in complete submission.

Grant insight, that with all my heart and mind I may observe your laws without transgression.

Direct me in the path of your commands, for I delight in them as my possession.

14. To your decrees and statutes turn my heart, that all your words of wisdom I may ponder.
O LORD, let me not from your laws depart, nor to the love of selfish gain surrender.
Restrain me lest I wistful glances dart at vanities and yearn for earthly splendid.

15. LORD, keep your word! Come to your servant’s aid.
Then all will stand in fear and awe before you.
Avert from me the taunting that I dread.
Your laws are good, acclaimed by all who fear you.
I long for them. Your justice makes me glad; through it revive me, LORD, for I revere you.

16. May your unfailing mercy come to me;
as you have promised, show me your salvation.
All those who taunt me with their mockery
I then will answer without hesitation.
LORD, I have put my trust in your decrees,
for you have sworn to grant me liberation.

17. LORD, do not rob me of your truthful word;
   let nothing me from your commandments sever.
   Your ordinances hope to me afford;
   I vow to keep them always and forever.
   Then shall I walk in liberty, O LORD:
your laws I’ve sought, and they shall fail me never.

18. Undaunted I will kings and princes face
to speak of your decrees, your revelation,
and not be put to shame or fear disgrace:
your laws I love and hold in veneration.
I reach for your commandments and rejoice
as I reflect on them in meditation.

† Zayin

19. Remember in your steadfast faithfulness
   your word of hope, once to your servant spoken.
   O LORD, in my affliction and distress
   you comfort me with promises unbroken.
   Through them have I gained life and happiness,
   for of your love they are a precious token.

20. Although the proud may scorn me utterly,
   no path of evil have I ever taken.
   When I recall your laws, they comfort me,
   for they from days of old have stood unshaken.
   Hot indignation grips me when I see
   how wicked men your precepts have forsaken.

21. Your statutes are the theme of all my song
   wherever here on earth I make my dwelling.
   Your name, LORD, I remember all night long;
your precepts I obey, my vow fulfilling.
I’ve kept your laws, resisting sin and wrong;
this proved to be a blessing all-excelling.
23. I will make haste in doing what is right, by your commandments guided and instructed.
Though with their ropes the wicked bind me tight, your statutes I will never leave neglected.
I praise you in the middle of the night for all the righteous laws you have enacted.

24. With all who fear you I keep company,
to those who heed your laws my friendship showing.
Your mercy is poured forth abundantly, and with your love the earth is overflowing.
O LORD, reveal your statutes all to me and so unfold the knowledge most worth knowing.

25. To me, your servant, you have kindness shown, your mercy with your promise underpinning.
Instruct me, LORD, for it is you alone
who are of all true knowledge the beginning.
I went astray, but as I wandered on,
you humbled me, and now I keep from sinning.

26. LORD, you are good, and what you do is good.
Teach me, and by your truth let me be guided.
My name is smeared by false men, proud and rude,
yet wholly with your precepts I have sided.
They in their godless hearts are dull and crude,
but by your law I am with joy provided.

27. How good it was for me to suffer pain
so that in all your statutes you might school me.
The perfect law that you, O LORD, ordain
exceeds all earthly riches. Let it rule me!
Your ordinances are my greatest gain,
for gold and silver can no longer fool me.

28. LORD, you have fashioned me with your own hands;
by you was I once moulded and created.
Give me then insight into your commands,
that to your law I may be dedicated.
All those who fear you shall applaud my stand;
since in your word I trust, they are elated.

29. I know, O LORD, your judgments all are just;
in faithfulness you brought me tribulation.
As you have promised – and your word I trust –
now let your mercy be my consolation.
In your compassion grant me life and rest:
your law is my delight and exultation.

30. Let proud and godless men be put to shame,
for I am wronged by those who are false-hearted;
but your decrees I’ll ponder and proclaim.
May by my words the faithful be supported.
May I obey your statutes without blame,
that far from me all shame may be averted.
31. With longing I your saving power invoke;
your word gives hope that nothing can extinguish.
With failing eyes I for your promise look:
when will you comfort me and heal my anguish?
Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I’ll not forget your laws as here I languish.

32. LORD, how long does your servant have to wait?  
When will I see your punishment inflicted  
on those who persecute me in their hate,  
whose wickedness seems to go undetected?  
See how the proud for me their snares have set.  
They flout your law; your word they have rejected.

33. All your commandments shall securely stand;  
LORD, help me, for by liars I am hounded.  
Though they have almost swept me from the land,  
I’ve kept your law, in which my hope is founded.  
In your unfailing love my life defend,  
that I may heed what you, LORD, have expounded.

34. Fixed in the heavens is your eternal word;  
firm is your promise through the generations.  
The earth, by you established, has endured;
you are the faithful God of my salvation.
By your appointment all stands firm, O LORD, for you are served by all of your creation.

35. If your commands had not been my delight, I would have perished here in my affliction. Your precepts I will not forget or slight: you have renewed my life by their direction. LORD, I am yours. Come, save me by your might. Your laws have I sought out for my instruction.

36. Though wicked men in ambush lie concealed and are intent on plotting my destruction, I will reflect on what you have revealed. I see a limit set to all perfection; but your commands, which ever have prevailed, are boundless – without end, without restriction.

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37. Oh, how I love the teachings of your law! I ponder them, all day in study spending. Your precepts make me wiser than my foe, for the support they give is never-ending. Through them, I far more than my teachers know: I have surpassed them all in understanding.

38. I have more insight than the old and grey, all owing to the laws I am observing. I keep my feet from every evil way to honour your commandments without swerving. LORD, you yourself have taught me not to stray; so I walk on, a steady course preserving.

39. O LORD, how pleasing is your steadfast word. Sweet are your promises of grace and favour; yes, nothing greater sweetness can afford – not even honey, sweet though be its savour. Your statutes grant me wisdom as reward; I therefore hate false ways and shun them ever.
40. Your word, it is a lamp to guide my feet,
a lantern shining on the path before me.
I’ve sworn an oath and here my vow repeat
to keep the laws that of your love assure me.
I suffer in affliction and defeat;
true to your promise, comfort and restore me.

41. Accept, O Lord, my offerings of praise
and let me by your statutes be instructed.
Though I have been in danger countless days,
your laws I’ve not forgotten or rejected.
My foe for me his snares and pitfalls lays,
but your commandments I have not neglected.

42. Your testimonies are forever mine –
my heritage and permanent possession,
the joy that I shall in my heart enshrine –
and to their praise I ever give expression.
My heart to your commandments I incline,
right to the end upholding my confession.

43. I hate the fickle and divided heart;
I love your law and praise it with elation.
You are my shield, my refuge, my support;
your word shall be my hope and expectation.
You evildoers, all from me depart,
that I may serve the God of my salvation.

44. Uphold me, LORD, and so my life sustain;
true to your promise, grant me preservation.
Let me not hope and trust in you in vain,
for I rely on you for liberation.
Your statutes I will evermore maintain;
I turn to them in reverent meditation.

45. All those who from your statutes go astray
you will reject. In vain do they dissemble.
Like worthless dross you cast them all away;
I therefore love your laws. Let me not stumble.
I dread the awesome judgments you display;
the fear of you makes my whole body tremble.

46. See how what I have done is just and right;
O LORD, to my oppressors do not leave me.
Ensure your servant’s welfare, God of might;
let not the arrogant oppress and grieve me.
My eyes grow dim with watching day and night
for you to keep your promise and relieve me.

47. Treat me according to your love and grace;
guide me towards the truth for which I’m yearning.
Help me gain insight into your decrees;
LORD, teach your servant what is most worth learning.
To let me grasp the justice of your ways,
come to my aid and make me more discerning.

48. It’s time for you to act and to be bold;
your holy law is being violated.
I prize it more than all the finest gold;
my love for your commands is unabated.
In all my ways your precepts I uphold;
the paths of falsehood I have ever hated.

Psalm 119
50. With open mouth I pant for your commands and to my deepest longing give expression. 
To those who love your name you grace extend; turn, then, to me as well in your compassion. Direct my footsteps. Help me to withstand the power of sin and keep me from transgression.

51. Save me from man’s iniquitous designs, that I may serve you, by your laws directed. LORD, make your face upon your servant shine, and by your statutes let me be instructed. While shedding streams of tears, I grieve and pine, for your commands are utterly neglected.

52. LORD, you are upright and your laws are just; your judgments you on righteousness have founded. In your decrees have I placed all my trust,
for they in faithfulness are firmly grounded. My zeal consumes me, and I am distressed when foes ignore the truth you have expounded.

53. Your promise is well tested and secure; I cherish it as token of your favour. Though I’m of no account, despised and poor, I love your precepts and forget them never. Your justice will eternally endure; your law is true and shall abide forever.

54. Though I encounter anguish and distress, your laws are my delight and consolation. Ever enduring is your righteousness, and everlasting is your revelation. Your servant, LORD, with understanding bless, that I may live, rejoicing in salvation.

Psalm 119

55. To you, O LORD, I cry with all my heart; be merciful and hear my supplication. From your commandments I will not depart. I call on you and plead for preservation. Save me, O LORD, and come to my support, that I may keep your laws with dedication.

56. Before the break of day I cry to you; your word I trust, for you are my defender. I even lie awake the whole night through, that I your steadfast promises may ponder. LORD, in your righteousness my life renew; hear me and show your love and mercy tender.

57. My foes draw near and malice they intend; far from your laws are those by whom I’m hounded. But you are near, and I on you depend, for true are all the words you have commanded. Long have I known that they are without end; all your decrees you have forever founded.
58. See my affliction, LORD, and set me free,
for your commandments I obey and cherish.
Defend my cause and win release for me.
True to your word, allow my life to flourish.
But far removed shall all salvation be
from those who spurn your statutes: they shall perish.

59. Great is, O LORD, the mercy you have shown;
grant me the life by your decree awarded.
Though countless foes may seek to hunt me down,
your laws I’ve not forgotten or discarded.
I loathe the faithless for the wrong they’ve done;
your word have they defied and disregarded.

60. See how I love and cherish your commands;
I follow them in all that I endeavour.
Preserve my life by your almighty hand;
O LORD, be mindful of your love and favour.
In all your words I see your truth maintained;
each one of your decrees endures forever.

61. Though kings and princes hound me without cause,
I stand in awe before your revelation.
LORD, I rejoice at all your promises;
they *like great* spoil rouse *me to jubilation.*
All *falsehood* and deception *I despise;*
your *laws* I love and *hold in veneration.*

62. O *LORD,* *I praise you seven times a day,*
for *righteous* are the *laws* you *have provided.*
Great *peace is* theirs who *cherish and obey*
all *your commands and by your word are* guided.
No *stumbling-block or snare besets the way*
of *those who* in *your justice have confided.*

63. For your *salvation,* *LORD,* *I hope and pray,*
and *your commandments* I *fulfil sincerely.*
I *follow your decrees and will not stray,*
for *all your testimonies* I *love dearly.*
Your *precepts* and your *statutes* I *obey,*
for *you know all my ways and see them* clearly.

64. May *all my pleading reach your holy throne;*
*remember me in pity and compassion.*
Bless *me with insight,* for *I am your own.*
Draw near, *O LORD,* and *answer my petition.*
According to the *mercy you have shown,*
deliver *me from evil and oppression.*

65. Now *let my lips run over with your praise,*
for *your decrees you have in me implanted.*
My *tongue shall* sing, a *joyful anthem* raise,
for *in your statutes justice is presented.*
Let your *hand* help *me when your servant strays;*
I’ve *chosen,* *LORD,* the *precepts you have* granted.

66. I *long for your salvation night and day,*
and *your commandments my delight awaken.*
O *let me live,* that *I may praise your ways;*
let *your decrees lend me support unshaken.*
I *wander like a sheep that’s gone astray.*
Come, *seek me,* *LORD!* *Your laws* I’ve *not forsaken.*
PSALM 120

A song of ascents.

1. I seek the LORD in my affliction
   and cry to him for my protection:

   “O save me, LORD, from lips that slander,
   from tongues that will to falsehood pander.”

   Deceitful tongue, what shall he grant you,
   and with what more shall he present you?

   Sharp arrows from a warrior’s bow
   and burning charcoal’s red-hot glow!

2. Woe me! Behold my tribulation,
   for Meshech is my habitation;
   near Kedar’s tents I’m forced to wander,
   where treacherous tribesmen kill and plunder.

   Too long I have with those resided
   who hate all peace and who deride it.
   I am for peace, which they abhor;
   thus when I speak, they are for war!
1. I lift my eyes unto the hills. From where will help appear?
Who will relieve my fear? The LORD his promises fulfills—
he who made earth and heaven;
his help is freely given.

2. He will not let you slip or fall,
for he is at your side;
support he will provide.
The keeper of all Israel
will guide and guard you ever;
he sleeps or slumbers never.

3. He is your shelter on the way,
the shade at your right hand
in dry and barren land.
The moon by night, the sun by day
will never harm or hurt you;
the LORD will not desert you.

4. All evil strikes at you in vain;
the LORD will keep your life
secure in woes and strife.
When you go out, when you come in,
the LORD will fail you never
but keep you safe forever.
1. My heart exulted! I was glad
when I heard eager voices call,
“Come, let us go now, one and all,
to Zi-on, to the house of God.”

Our journey has been rich-ly blest,
for, O Je-ru-sa-lem, at last
our feet with-in your gates are stand-ing!
Je-ru-sa-lem! We stood in awe
when we your strength and beau-ty saw
while to your cit-a-dels ascend-ing.
2. Jerusalem, designed so well, built as a close-knit unity – there flock together joyfully the tribes and clans of Israel. They to Jerusalem ascend, according to the LORD’s command, to thank him with their adoration. For there are set the royal thrones of David’s house, and there his sons with righteous judgments rule the nation.

3. Pray that Jerusalem be blest: “May peace prevail within your walls, and safety in your citadels. May those who love you there find rest.” Now for the sake of friends and kin, Jerusalem, I say again: “May lasting peace be yours to cherish.” And mindful that the God of grace has in your midst his dwelling place, I pray that you may thrive and flourish.
RSV
to you in heaven, our Lord so good and great,
I lift my eyes and wait.
As eyes of slaves will to their lord be turning
when for a favour yearning,
and as a slave-girl’s eyes intently linger
up-on her mistress’ fingers,
so our eyes, too, look to our Master’s face
until he grants us grace.

2. Show us your pity; LORD, be merciful!
O LORD, be merciful!
Too long, O God, have we been made to suffer
the insults of the scoffer.
We’ve had our fill of taunting and derision,
of all the cruel oppression
by those who in their proud complacency
treat us disdainfully.

PSALM 123
A song of ascents.
Geneva, 1551
PSALM 124

A song of ascents. Of David.

Geneva, 1551

1. What if the LORD had not been on our side?

Let Is-ra-el de-clare this far and wide:

If when our foes at- tack in bit- ter strife,

the LORD our God had not been on our side,

they sure-ly would have swal- lowed us a-live.

2. Without the help of God, of him who saves,
fierce torrents would have swept us to our graves.
Yes, if the LORD had not been merciful,
we would have perished in the roaring waves.
The raging waters would have drowned us all.

3. God rescued us from teeth that rip and tear.
Praise him who broke the fowler’s deadly snare.
We have escaped, are free now like a bird.
Our help comes from the LORD who hears our prayer,
from him who shaped creation by his word.
1. Those who trust in the Lord resemble Mount Zion, firm and sure, which ever will endure; it stands unMOVED and will not tremBLE. So Israel will not be shaken or be forsaken.

2. Jerusalem! As all around her the mountains stand on guard to keep her peace unmarred, so will the Lord himself surround her to guard his own and be their Saviour now and forever.

3. The wicked’s sceptre will not humble the land he did entrust to people right and just, lest they, enticed by evil, stumble, and they their hands to wrong be turning, God’s counsel spurning.

4. Do good, O Lord, to those who fear you, to those who in your sight are godly and upright. To all in Israel who revere you, when sinners to their doom are driven, your peace be given!
2. In his enduring faithfulness
the LORD did wondrous things for us.
With shouts of gladness and delight
we gloriied in his deeds of might.
Again, LORD, grant us restoration,
as in the Negev’s desolation
the rain-filled streams turn arid sand
into a green and pleasant land.
3. Let those who sow their seed in tears,
be-set by anxious cares and fears,
at harvest time no longer weep,
rejoicing in the crops they reap.
The sower going forth in sorrow
to carry seed to field and furrow
will with his sheaves come home again,
exulting in the golden grain.
2. In vain at early dawn you rise
   and then at night go late to bed
   only to slave all day for bread.
   In vain you toil and heave your sighs.
   On those he loves the LORD will heap
   his blessings even while they sleep.

3. Our children all are gifts of God,
   our sons and daughters his reward –
   each one a blessing from the LORD,
   as heritage on us bestowed.
   Like arrows in a warrior’s hands
   are sons that rise to one’s defence.

4. Blest is a man when in his youth
   the LORD with sons has favoured him,
   who has a quiver filled with them –
   his arrows in the fight for truth.
   Great is the strength that they will show
   when in the gate they face their foe.
1. **Blest is the man who always reveres and serves the LORD,**
who, walking in his pathways,
o-beys and keeps his word.

The fruit of all your labour you as reward will eat;
you, blest by his great favour,
will have what you may need.

2. **Your wife a vine resembles,**
fruitful within your house.
Like olive shoots assemble
the children God allows.
Around your table sitting,
they are a rich reward,
a blessing great and fitting
for him who fears the LORD.
3. From Zion come your blessing; may you see Salem’s peace and happiness progressing until your days will cease. May you through life’s duration know that your seed is well and see their generations. Peace be on Israel.

PSALM 129
A song of ascents.

1. “They have oppressed me greatly from my youth.”

Make this your song, O Israel, and repeat it:

“They have oppressed me greatly from my youth, but they have failed, for I am undefeat-ed.

2. “They ploughed my back as if they ploughed a field; long furrows drew those enemies who hound me.” The LORD is righteous; he, my strength and shield, has cut the cords with which the wicked bound me.

3. May all those who hate Zion be brought low.
Put them to shame, LORD. Crush them by your power.
Make them like grasses that on housetops grow, that shrivel in the sun before they flower.

4. No reaper gathers those to have them threshed; no binder such a worthless crop will rescue.
No passers-by will shout, “May you be blessed!” They will not say, “We in the LORD’s name bless you!”
2. If, showing no compassion,
you would our sins record
and mark all our transgressions,
who then could stand, O LORD?
But you will pardon fully
all our iniquity,
that we may serve you truly
and fear your majesty.
3. O God of my salvation,
my soul, with longing stirred,
waits for your consolation,
hopes in your steadfast word.
More keenly I am yearning
for you, O faithful One,
than watchers for the morning
await the break of dawn.

4. Hope in the LORD, O nation!
With him is steadfast love,
and he with full salvation
will bless you from above.
The LORD will in compassion
for Israel atone;
yes, from all their transgression
he will redeem his own.

PSALM 131
A song of ascents. Of David.

1. O LORD, my heart is free from pride;
conceit my eyes cannot abide.
I do not look for what would be
too great, too wonderful for me.

2. No! Like a child that, weaned at last,
lies in its mother’s arms at rest,
no longer fretting anxiously,
my soul is quieted in me.
Psalm 131

3. Hope in the LORD, O Israel;
he surely will make all things well.

For his great wisdom, him adore;
trust him both now and evermore.

PSALM 132

A song of ascents.

1. Remember, LORD, how war and strife
and hardships burdened David’s life;
re-call his days with troubles rife.

To God an oath he swore aloud;
to Jacob’s Mighty One he vowed:
2. “I will not enter my own house, or get into my bed, and drowse or sleep, till I have paid my vows, till I find for the LORD a place, for Jacob’s God a dwelling place.”

3. In Ephrathah the news we heard, in Jaër’s fields our hearts were stirred; we found the ark and spread the word: “Let us go to his dwelling place and worship there before his face.”

4. O LORD, go to your place of rest, you and your ark, with power blessed, and let your faithful priests be dressed in holiness and so proclaim your righteousness and wondrous fame.

5. Let shouts of praise the heavens shake, your saints their joyful anthems make; and for your servant David’s sake, LORD, do not turn away your face from him, anointed by your grace.

6. The LORD has once to David sworn an oath from which he will not turn: “There will to you a child be born, a son who from your line will spring, whom on your throne I’ll set as king.

7. “If then your sons in faith uphold my covenant, made in days of old, and keep the laws that I unfold, I to their offspring shall pass on your kingdom’s everlasting throne.”

8. For Zion, by all men admired, the LORD has chosen and acquired and for his resting place desired: “Jerusalem is founded well; for evermore I here will dwell.”

A-bundant-ly will she be fed;

I’ll sat-is-fy her poor with bread.

Her priests I’ll with sal-va- tion dress;

her saints will shout with hap-pi-ness.

10. “There I will cause, in David’s line,
a horn to sprout, a lamp to shine
for my anointed as a sign.
His ene mies I clothe with shame,
but him I crown with lustrous fame.”
1. How good it is when brothers are united,
   with one another’s company delighted,
   and live in pleasant harmony.

   It’s like the precious oil on Aaron’s head
   when down his beard and priestly robe it spread,
   that he might God’s anointed be.

2. It’s like the dew of Hermon, so refreshing,
   which to the hills of Zion is a blessing
   when it in cooling drops descends.
   For there, in Zion, in his dwelling place,
   the Lord bestows amazing gifts of grace
   and grants the life that never ends.
1. Come, bless the LORD with one accord,
you faithful servants of the LORD,
who praise him in his house by night
and serve him there with all your might.

2. Your hands in prayer and worship raise;
adore him in his holy place.
Come, kneel before him in his house;
extol his name with sacred vows.

3. The LORD now bless you from above,
from Zion in his boundless love—
our God who made both earth and sky.
Praise be to him, the LORD Most High.
2. Praise the LORD, for he is good; sing your praise to him alone. He chose Jacob for himself; Israel he made his own. Far above all gods is he, great in power and majesty.

3. He does all that pleases him; heaven, earth, the deepest sea do his bidding, heed his will; clouds rise up at his decree. With the rain he lightning sends; winds and tempests he commands.

4. Egypt’s firstborn he destroyed, striking down both man and beast. He his signs and wonders sent; Egypt’s kingdom he laid waste, showing Pharaoh and his court that no man his will can thwart.
6. Your exalted name, O LORD, will stand firm for evermore; your great glory and renown through all ages will endure. For the LORD will vindicate all who for his mercy wait.

7. Idols are but precious ore, fashioned by the hands of men. They have eyes, but cannot see; nations worship them in vain. They have mouths, but cannot speak. Why should men their favour seek?

8. They have ears, but cannot hear; nothing can they understand. In their mouths there is no breath, and their makers, in the end, like their idols will become; so will all who trust in them.
9. Come, O house of Israel,
sing the praises of the LORD.
Come, O Aaron’s priestly house,
bless his name with one accord.
Levi’s house, your voices raise.
You that fear him, sing his praise.

10. Bl est from Zion be the LORD,
who dwells in Jerusalem.
Let his people all rejoice;
let them praise and worship him.
Hallelujah! Praise the LORD!
Bless his name with one accord.

PSALM 136

1. O give thanks and praise the LORD,
God of gods, with one accord,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

2. Praise the mighty King of kings,
who alone does wondrous things,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

3. With great skill the heavens he made;
earth he on the waters laid,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.
Psalm 136

4. Gave the sun by day for light,
moon and stars to rule the night,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

5. He made Egypt’s greatness vain,
caused their firstborn to be slain,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

6. He stretched out his mighty hand,
brought out Israel from that land,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

7. God divided the Red Sea,
led his people through it, free,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

8. Pharaoh’s host was overthrown;
God through deserts led his own,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.

9. Mighty kings of glorious fame
he destroyed and put to shame,
for his steadfast love is sure;
it shall evermore endure.
10. Sihon, king of the Amorites, 
Og of Bashan, by his might, 
for his steadfast love is sure; 
it shall evermore endure.

11. As a heritage, their land 
he gave into Israel’s hand, 
for his steadfast love is sure; 
it shall evermore endure.

12. He remembered all our woes 
and redeemed us from our foes, 
for his steadfast love is sure; 
it shall evermore endure.

13. Food to all will he supply; 
praise our God, enthroned on high, 
for his steadfast love is sure; 
it shall evermore endure.
2. How shall we sing the LORD’s songs in our anguish while in a foreign land we mourn and languish?
Jerusalem, for love of you I cry;
my right hand wither if I you deny.
My mouth be dumb if ever I forget you,
if not above my highest joy I set you!

3. Remember, LORD, how Edom showed no pity
that day when Babylon razed Zion’s city,
how Esau’s sons rejoiced and said to them,
“Tear down, tear down all of Jerusalem.
Destroy and raze it down to its foundations!”
O God, do not forget their provocations.

4. O Babylon, destroyer, God shall smite you!
How happy he, appointed to requite you
with all the evil you to us have done!
May all mankind your lonely ruins shun.
How happy he who shall, devoid of pity,
dash on the rocks the children of your city!
2. You answered me the day I called; you made me bold and valiant-hearted. You heard me in my darkest hour and by your power was I supported. Now let the kings of all the earth in awe shout forth their praise unbroken, for peoples everywhere, O LORD, have heard the words that you have spoken.
4. LORD, you will to my rescue come when troubles loom from all directions. Though enemies around me swarm, your mighty arm is my protection. God shall fulfil his plan for me; his promise he will keep forever. LORD, God of grace, do not cast off your works of love. Forsake them never!
1. LORD, you have searched me, heart and soul.
   My in-most thoughts, you know them all.
   When I sit down and when I rise
   you see me with your watch-ful eyes.
   and from a-far your keen discern-ing
   re-veals to you my hopes and yearn-ings.

2. You trace my steps and day by day
   see me at rest or on my way.
   The paths I take are known to you,
   for you watch everything I do.
   Before my tongue one word can mention
   you are aware of my intentions.

3. You are before me and behind;
   I will in you my refuge find.
   LORD, you have laid your hand on me.
   Such knowledge is a mystery
   so high that I cannot attain it,
   so deep that I cannot explain it.

4. Where can I from your Spirit flee?
   Where will you not be near to me?
   If I to heaven’s height ascend,
   then I shall there before you stand.
   If I into the depths descended,
   you would not leave me unattended.
6. If I say, “Let the gloom of night surround me, keep me from your sight,” then darkness is not dark to you; it will not hide me from your view. With you the night is never lightless; before your eyes the dark is brightness.

7. O LORD, you formed my inward parts—my inmost self, my mind and heart. You shaped them in my mother’s womb, wove them together on your loom. With awe, with reverent admiration, I praise your wonderful creation.

8. O LORD, you know me through and through; my frame was not concealed from you when I in utmost secrecy was knit and braided skilfully. You know how I in safe seclusion was made with delicate precision.
9. You, LORD, when I was yet unborn, beheld my undeveloped form, and long before my life began you in your book decreed its span; you then recorded on its pages your plan for me in all its stages.

10. How precious are your thoughts to me! How vast the sum of them must be. I try to count them – they are more than all the sand upon the shore. O God, when I from sleep awaken, I am still with you, not forsaken.

11. O God, if only you would slay all those who go their wicked way. O let them all from me depart, those men of blood and evil heart. They strive against you in their scheming; your holy name they keep blaspheming.

12. Do I not hate those who hate you, those who their wickedness pursue? O LORD, all who against you rise I as my enemies despise. May woes and misery await them. I with a perfect hatred hate them!

13. Search me, O God, and know my heart; see if I from your ways depart. LORD, probe my every anxious thought and let me by your word be taught. Help me walk on where you are leading, in everlasting ways proceeding.
1. From evil men, O LORD, protect me;
   from all their fury, save my life.
   Their hearts and minds are full of mal-ice;
   they dai-ly stir up war and strife.

2. Their tongues are sharper than a serpent’s;
   their words with deadly venom sting.
   O LORD, protect me from the wicked,
   for they like vipers ruin bring.

3. Keep me from those who rage against me,
   those who for me have spread a net.
   They in their pride seek my destruction
   and in my path their snares have set.

4. LORD, save me, hear my cry for mercy.
   “You are my God,” so I have said.
   O LORD, you are my strong defender
   and in the battle shield my head.

5. Let not my foes’ desires be granted;
   LORD, let their plotting not succeed.
   Let their own sin be their undoing;
   repay them for their pride and greed.

6. May burning coals fall down upon them;
   let them be thrown into the fire.
   LORD, put an end to all their slander
   and fling them into pits of mire.
7. I know, LORD, you uphold the needy; you justice for the poor proclaim. Surely the righteous with thanksgiving will in your presence praise your name.

PSALM 141
A psalm of David.

1. Has-ten, LORD! Hear my sup-pli-ca-tion.
   O let my prayer like in-cense rise;
   re-ceive as eve-ning sac-ri-fice
   the hands I lift in ad-o-ra-tion.

2. Save me, LORD, from all sin and folly and guard the doorway of my lips; set there a constant watch that keeps my mouth from speaking words unholy.

3. Let my heart to wrongs not incite me, nor let me seek the company of those who love iniquity; may not their choicest foods delight me.

4. Let good men, when I am transgressing, rebuke me, strike me, punish me. This will like healing ointment be – a welcome kindness and a blessing.
Psalm 141

6. As new-ploughed earth with rocks is cluttered,
as barren fields are strewn with stones,
so, as it were, our very bones
before the gaping grave lie scattered.

7. LORD, my eyes I fix now directly
on you, my helper in the strife.
Save me from danger, guard my life;
in your unfailing love, protect me.

8. Keep me from those who would ensnare me,
from traps that wicked men have set;
let them be caught in their own net,
while I escape because you spare me.
PSALM 142

A maskil of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.

1. With all my voice to God I cry;
I call upon the LORD Most High.
Before his face my grief I show
and tell my trouble and my woe.

2. To you I pour out my complaint,
for I am weak, my spirit faint.
O LORD, I turn to you and pray,
for it is you who know my way.

3. Foes in my path have laid a snare.
I look, but none sees my despair;
I find no place of refuge near,
no friend to whom my life is dear.

4. LORD, hear my cry and comfort me;
in my distress to you I flee.
You are my shelter from the strife,
my portion in the land of life.

5. O God my Saviour, set me free
from those who are too strong for me.
Your servant out of prison bring,
that thankful praises I may sing.

6. The righteous then shall gather round
to share the blessings I have found,
their hearts made glad because they see
how richly you have dealt with me.
PSALM 143

A psalm of David.

1. LORD, listen to my supplication,
   my fervent plea for your salvation.
   Be true to me, do what is right.
   Withhold from me your condemnation,
   for none is righteous in your sight.

2. My bitter foe has long pursued me;
   my life he crushed when he subdued me.
   By him into the darkness led,
   I dwell where light and joy elude me;
   he leaves me there like those long dead.

3. My soul is drained of expectation;
   my heart is numb with consternation.
   When I remember former days,
   I am absorbed in meditation
   and ponder all your works and ways.

4. LORD, see my hands to you extending;
   I thirst for you, on you depending.
   My spirit faints. Hide not your face,
   or I will be like those descending
down to the gloom of death’s abyss.
5. Your face in love towards me turning,  
show me your mercy in the morning.  
I trust in you for my support.  
Teach me your way and guide my learning:  
to you I offer all my heart.

6. LORD, save me from my foes forever;  
to you, my Rock, I flee for cover.  
Teach me your will: you are my God.  
Let your good Spirit, O my Saviour,  
lead me along a level road.

7. For your name’s sake, do not neglect me  
but silence all who now afflict me.  
Your justice and your mercy show!  
I am your servant. LORD, protect me;  
deliver me from all my woe.
1. **Blest be the LORD, my rock, he who sustains me.**

My hands are strong, my God for battle trains me;

my fortress and my rock to whom I flee,

he is my strong-hold and delivers me.

God is my shield; I turn to him for shelter.

When foes attack, he will not let me falter.

Praise him who blesses me with victory,

for he subdues the peoples under me.

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2. **LORD, what is man, mere man, that you should even take note of him as you look down from heaven?**

For he is but a breath, a puff of wind,
a fleeting shadow. Soon his days will end.

**LORD, split the skies! Come down, make mountains tremble.**

Come and so touch them that they smoke and rumble.

Flash forth your lightning and so fight my fight.

Shoot forth your arrows. Put my foes to flight.
3. From heaven on high, stretch out your hand, O Saviour; your servant from the raging waves deliver. From troubles that engulf me, set me free, and from the hands of aliens rescue me. LORD, be my shield, my refuge, my defender; save me from foes whose mouths are filled with slander, whose right hand is a right hand of deceit, and for their lies repay them with defeat.

4. To you, O God, a new song I'll be singing; I'll play the ten-stringed lyre, my praises bringing to you who kings with victory reward, who freed your servant David from the sword. When foreign foes draw near, be my defender; save me from those whose mouths are filled with slander, whose right hand is a right hand of deceit, and for their lies repay them with defeat.

5. May in their youth our sons like saplings flourish, like sturdy plants that with the rains you nourish, our daughters with their beauty us enthral like graceful columns in a palace hall; and may our garners all be overflowing, provisions of all kinds on us bestowing. May in our fields our sheep so multiply that their ten thousands every count defy.

6. May all those blessings to your praise incite us, our oxen, drawing heavy loads, delight us. And may there be no breaching of our walls; may we be safe within our citadels. May in our streets no anguished cry distress us. Remember, LORD, your people’s prayer and bless us. How happy those who reap such rich reward! Yes, happy those whose king is God the LORD!
PSALM 145

A psalm of praise. Of David.

1. I will ex-alt you, O my God and King,
and bless your name for-ev-er as I sing.

Yes, dai-ly bless-ing you, I will a-dore
and praise your ho-ly name for ev-er-more.

Great is the LORD, wor-thy of praise un-end-ing;
his great-ness is be-yond all un-der-stand-ing.

One age will to the next pro-claim the sto-ry
of his great deeds, his acts of might and glo-ry.

2. They will, O LORD, your wondrous works relate,
and I will on your splendour meditate.
They of your glorious deeds will speak at length,
while I declare your awesome acts of strength.
They will acclaim your goodness with rejoicing,
sing of your justice, joyful praises voicing.
Great is your love and boundless your compassion;
slow is your wrath in dealing with transgression.
3. You show to all your goodness and your grace; you all your creatures in your love embrace. Your tender mercy they, O LORD, will bless, and all your saints will praise your faithfulness. They will extol your kingdom’s power and grandeur, your mighty acts and your majestic splendour, and so make known to every tribe and nation your glorious deeds, your kingdom’s exaltation.

4. Your kingdom will from age to age extend; of your dominion there will be no end. In mercy you uphold all those who fall, and you lift up the lowly when they call. All look to you in hope, and with good reason, for you prepare their food for them in season. Your hand you open in most gracious giving to satisfy the needs of all things living.

5. The LORD is just and kind in all his ways; he in his deeds his steadfast love displays. To all who call on him, the LORD is near; he satisfies all those who him revere. He hears the cry of those who seek him truly but will destroy the wicked and unruly. My mouth to him its praises will deliver. Let every creature praise his name forever.
1. Praise the LORD who reigns for-ev-er!

O my soul, bring him your praise.

I will bless my God and Mak-er

and ex-tol him all my days.

Prais-es to my God I’ll sing;

all my life I’ll praise my King.

2. Put no trust in prince or ruler,
in a man however wise.
In him is no help or power;
when his breath departs, he dies.
All his plans that very day
end when he returns to clay.

3. Blest is he who has as helper
Jacob’s God and hopes in him;
he made heaven, earth, and ocean,
shaping all things found in them.
In his faithfulness the LORD
will forever keep his word.

4. The oppressed will see God’s justice,
and the captives he sets free;
he, the LORD, will feed the hungry
and will make the blind to see.
He lifts up all those bowed down;
them he will with mercy crown.
5. He, the Lord, protects the strangers; orphans, widows He sustains. He will make the wicked stumble. Praise him who forever reigns. Zion’s children, sing his laud. Hallelujah, praise your God.

PSALM 147

Come, praise the Lord! It’s good and pleasant to praise his mercy ever-present.

Sing to the Lord, our God and Saviour, who shows his steadfast love and favour.

He builds Jerusalem’s foundations and reunites his scattered nation.

The broken-hearted he grants healing, binds up their wounds, his love revealing.

Geneva, 1562
Psalm 147

2. He counts the stars and knows their number;
each one he will by name remember.
Our Lord is great, in power exceeding,
his understanding past all telling.
The Lord lifts up the poor and humble
but causes wicked men to stumble.
O come in thankfulness before him;
with harp and joyful song adore him.

3. With clouds he covers all the heavens;
   rain for the earth by him is given.
The Lord makes grass on hillsides flourish;
the beasts and ravens he will nourish.
He does not value man’s resources:
the runner’s legs, the strength of horses.
But he delights in those who fear him,
who for his constant love revere him.
4. Jerusalem, now praise your Saviour!
   O Zion, thank him for his favour.
   Your gates he strengthens by his power;
   his gifts he on your children showers.
   Within your walls in peace he leads you
   and with the finest wheat he feeds you.
   To all the earth he issues orders
   that swiftly reach its farthest borders.

5. When he the wintry cold increases,
   he spreads the snow like woolly fleeces;
   like ashes he the hoarfrost scatters,
   and hailstones on the earth he clatters.
   Before his cold the water freezes
   till he the icy bonds releases:
   He sends his word, and winds start blowing;
   he melts the ice, and streams are flowing!

6. By him Jerusalem is guided;
   the LORD his statutes has provided,
   his steadfast love to Jacob showing,
   his word on Israel bestowing.
   He dealt thus with no other nation;
   they do not know his revelation.
   Come, praise the LORD, your gladness voicing
   and in his steadfast love rejoicing!
1. O praise the LORD! His name ex-alt!
Praise him from high-est heav-en’s vault.

You an-gels, from your lof-ty post
praise him with all the heaven-ly host.

You sun and moon, you con-stel-la-tions,
shine forth your light in a-dor-a-tion;
join with the clouds as they as-cend
in praise and wor-ship with-out end.

2. Let them ex-tol the LORD, for he
created them by his decree,
and by a law that will endur-e
he fixed their bounds for ever-more.
Let earth as well show him dev-o-tion:
praise him, great cre-a-tures of the ocean,
you frost and snow, you fire and hail;
praise him, you storms that do his will.
3. Praise him, you hills and mountains all,
you fruit trees and you cedars tall;
wild beasts and cattle, creeping things,
praise him with every bird that sings.
You kings and rulers of all nations,
praise him with joyful adoration.
Young men and maidens, join in song;
old men and children, sing along!

4. Let all creation praise his name,
extol his all-surpassing fame.
His glory covers earth and sky.
He raised his people’s horn on high;
his saints he blessed with praise and splendour,
showed Israel his mercy tender.
Close to his heart he keeps his own.
O praise the LORD! Praise him alone!
2. Sing to the LORD, his praise advancing with harp and tambourine and dancing, for in his people he takes pleasure; they are his joy and treasure. See how he crowns with victory those who walk in humility. Let them in glorious fame delight, rejoicing through the night.
3. Let from their lips be heard God’s praises while their right hand in vengeance raises the two-edged sword of vindication to vanquish heathen nations. 
May they God’s punishment inflict on those who his commands reject and bind their kings with iron chains until no foe remains.

4. Let Israel chastise their princes and punish them for their offences. By judgment passed and sentence given, they to their doom are driven. So let God’s people raise their voice and in this triumph all rejoice. He grants them glory as reward. O Zion, praise the LORD!
1. Hal-le-lu-jah! Praise the LORD in his house with one accord!

Praise him in the wide ex tent of his spacious firmament.

Sing and shout his praise uprightly.

His un-bound-ed great-ness praise and ex-tol his won-drous ways;

praise him for his deeds so might-y.

2. Praise him with the trumpet blast; praise his glory unsurpassed.
Praise him with the harp and lute; praise him with the strings and flute.
Worship him in exultation and with tambourine and dance praise his glorious excellence.
Praise his name with jubilation.
3. Let the *clashing cymbals* ring to the *praise of God our King.*
   With the *clanging cymbals’ noise* come before *him and rejoice.*
   Let the *breath of all things living* praise him *with a mighty sound.*
   Let your *voices shake the ground.*
   *Praise the LORD! Sing Hallelujah!*
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29. All Glory, Laud, and Honour

**“Christ has risen! Hallelujah!”**
30. Christ Jesus Lay in Death’s Strong Bands
31. Christ Has Risen! Hallelujah!
32. Christ the Lord is Risen Today
33. The Strife Is O’er, the Battle Done
34. God Gave to Us This Day of Days
35. If God Is on Our Side,
36. The God and Father of Our Lord
37. Hallelujah! Praised Be the Son

**“The Lord ascended up on high”**
38. Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus
39. Our Saviour, When He Told His Own
40. The Lord Ascended Up on High
41. Christ, Above All Glory Seated
42. Where High the Heavenly Temple Stands
43. Lo, What a Cloud of Witnesses
44. Rejoice, the Lord Is King
45. Jesus Shall Reign
46. Christ Shall Have Dominion

**“He has come, the Holy Spirit!”**
47. He Has Come the Holy Spirit!
48. Come, Praise the Holy Spirit!
49. The Spirit, Sent from Heaven Above
50. The Spirit Came, as Promised
“Watch o’er your church, O Lord”
51 O Faithful Is This Well-known Word
52 The Church’s One Foundation
53 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
54 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
55 Who Trusts in God, a Strong Abode
56 Loving Shepherd of Thy Sheep
57 We Praise You, Lord
58 Our Children, Lord, in Faith and Prayer
59 Come, Take by Faith the Body of the Lord
60 Until He Comes
61 We Thank You, Father! You Have Planted
62 For the Bread Which You Have Broken
63 The Lord’s Prayer
64 What Is in Life and Death My Only Aid
65 If You But Let the Father Guide You
66 Great Is Thy Faithfulness

“Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!”
67 Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha
68 Jesus Is Our Sure Defence
69 Lo, Round the Throne, a Glorious Band
70 Day of Judgment! Day of Wonders!
71 The Hope of Faith Shall Not Deceive Us
72 Behold the Amazing Gift of Love
73 Lo, What a Glorious Sight Appeared
74 Our Outer Nature Wastes Away
75 Alleluia! Alleluia!
76 Thank the Lord and Come with Praise

“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”
77 We Praise Thee, O God, Our Redeemer, Creator
78 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
79 We Come, O Christ, to You
80 Give to Our God Immortal Praise
81 O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
82 All Glory Be to Thee, Most High
83 I’ll Thank Thee, O My God and Saviour
84 Ye Servants of God
85 Now Thank We All Our God
I believe in God the Father almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate;
was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;

I believe a holy catholic church,

the communion of saints;

the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body;

and the life everlasting. Amen.
HYMN 2
In God, Our Heavenly Father, I Believe

The Apostles’ Creed

1. In God, our heavenly Father I believe –
   almighty Ruler, all-victorious,
   Creator of both heaven and earth,
   whose holy name is great and glorious.
   And I believe in Christ our Lord–
   Christ Jesus, the incarnate Word,
   God’s only Son, our faithful Saviour,
   sent to redeem a world forlorn;
   who was conceived by God the Spirit
   and of the virgin Mary born.
2. Our Lord was under Pilate crucified; the burden of God’s wrath he carried. Rejected and despised by men, he died for us, and then was buried, descending into death’s domain. But he the third day rose again; he to his heavenly throne ascended, at God’s right hand, and he, our Head, shall come again with power and glory to judge the living and the dead.

3. In God the Holy Spirit I believe – through whom we are a new creation. And I believe a catholic church, one holy Christian congregation; the true communion of all those whom God once as his people chose; the full forgiveness of transgressions, release from sin and mortal strife; the resurrection of the body, and glorious, everlasting life.
2. The prophets and apostles praise your deeds of might as they in chorus join the martyrs robed in white. Your holy church rejoices, everywhere confessing you, Father, high enthroned in glory all surpassing; your true and only Son, worthy of adoration; the Holy Spirit, source of help and consolation.

3. O Christ, our glorious King, the victory you have won. You, Lord, are God the Father’s everlasting Son. Yet you did not despise the Virgin’s womb, O Saviour, when you came from on high to free mankind forever. You then defeated death and Satan’s power infernal; you opened up the way that leads to life eternal.

4. You are enthroned in glory at God’s own right hand, till you from there as judge will on the clouds descend. O Lord, we therefore pray, grant help and vindication to those who through your precious blood have gained salvation.
In everlasting glory add them to the number of all your saints, O Lord. Your heritage remember!

5. We bless you day by day, we praise your holy name; from age to age your power and glory we acclaim. O Lord, keep us this day from evil and transgression. Have mercy on us, Lord; show pity and compassion. Let all who hope in you be with your love surrounded. In you alone we trust: we’ll never be confounded!

HYMN 4

We Praise You, God the Father, the Creator

1. We praise you, God the Father, the Creator; we praise you God the Son, our Lord and Saviour; we praise you, God the Spirit, co-e-ter-nal; one God al-might-y.

2. Trinity holy, Unity unbroken, let all creation praise you without ceasing, for you are one in truth and love and splendour, Rock of salvation.

3. We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; LORD God eternal, we bow down before you. Yours be all honour, yours the power and glory, now and forever.
2. Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea,
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

3. Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy, there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love and purity.

4. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea:
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
1. Praise God Most High, you servants of the Lord.
   Praise his great name and of his glory sing;
   with shouts of joy your thankful praises bring.
   Let him by all his people be adored,
   acknowledged as their sovereign Lord and King.

2. Praise God the Father, great in majesty;
   praise God the Son, who came to save his own;
   praise God the Spirit, sent from heaven’s throne,
   that he our guide and comforter might be.
   Praise Father, Son, and Spirit, Three in One.
HYMN 7
Glory Be to God the Father
Regent Square Henry Smart, 1866

1. Glory be to God the Father,
glory be to God the Son,
glory be to God the Spirit,
God Almighty, Three in One!

Glory be to him alone!

2. Glory be to him who loved us,
washed us from all sin and stain!
Glory be to him who bought us,
made us kings with him to reign!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Praise the Lamb that once was slain!

3. Glory to the King of angels,
glory to the church’s King,
glory to the King of nations!
Heaven and earth, your praises bring.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
To the King of glory sing!

4. “Glory, blessing, praise eternal!”
Thus the choir of angels sings.
“Honour, glory, power, dominion!”
Thus its praise creation brings.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Praise the mighty King of kings!
HYMN 8
Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Old Hundredth
Geneva, 1551

1. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

praise him, all creatures here below;

praise him above, ye heavenly host;

praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (A-men*)

*May be sung with Amen-cadence

HYMN 9
Glory Be to the Father

Gloria Patri
Charles Meineke, 1844

1. Glory be to the Father

and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and ever shall be,

world without end. Amen, Amen.
1. Now blessed be the Lord our God, 

the God of Is-ra-el, 

for he a-lone does won-drous works: 

his glo-rious deeds ex-cel; 

for he a-lone does won-drous works: 

his glo-rious deeds ex-cel.

2. And blessed be his glorious name 

through all eternity; 

the whole earth let his glory fill: 

Amen! So shall it be; 

the whole earth let his glory fill: 

Amen! So shall it be.
2. “I am the LORD, your God and Saviour, who out of slavery set you free, who brought you from the land of Egypt. Have, then, no other gods but me.

3. “You shall not make or serve an idol: a jealous God am I, the LORD, who punish evildoers’ offspring but cherish those who heed my word.

4. “Invoke the LORD with fear and reverence; you shall not take his name in vain. The LORD your God will not hold guiltless those who his holy name profane.

5. “Observe the sabbath, keep it holy; you and your house that day shall rest. On six days only shall you labour; the seventh day the LORD has blessed.

6. “Honour your father and your mother; then shall the LORD your days extend and bless you in the land he gives you. Obey the LORD your God’s command.
8. "Your neighbour’s goods you shall not covet, 
and everything he calls his own – 
his wife, his house, his fields and cattle – 
you shall respect as his alone."

9. O LORD, let your commandments teach us 
our sins and misery to know, 
that we, delivered from all evil, 
to you our thankfulness may show.
1. Give ear, O heavens! Earth, hear my address!

Like gentle rain be all my teaching;

Like morning dew upon the grass,

Like spring-time showers be my preaching.

I will declare the Lord's great name;

O praise our God and spread his fame.

He is the Rock of our salvation;

His ways are truth and equity.

Proclaim his glory with elation.

How righteous and how just is he!
2. They did not act as children of the Lord,

that twisted, crooked generation.

Is this how you esteem his word?

You are a senseless, foolish nation.

As Father he established you,

and did not he create you too?

Think back on by-gone times: remember

his gracious deeds in days of old.

Your father can reveal their number;

all this your elders will unfold.
3. When God Most High did parcel out the lands, dispersing all mankind as nations, he fixed their boundaries by his hand to give all tribes their place and station. His chosen people formed his share; he Jacob as his own declared. The LORD in barren deserts found him; in howling wastelands he drew nigh and with his care did he surround him, just as the apple of his eye.

4. Lo, as an eagle, hovering o’er its young when it has thrust them from its eyrie, will catch them, bearing them along on outspread wings that never weary, so was the LORD then Jacob’s guide: no foreign god was at his side. He made him ride on lofty mountains, fed him on harvests of the field. From crags flowed honey as from fountains; the flinty rock its oil did yield.

5. The rams and goats of Bashan, rich with fat, the curds and milk by flocks presented, the blood of grapes in brimming vats, the finest wheat to him he granted. But Jeshurun grow fat, and kicked – how fat you’ve grown, how sleek and thick! Then he forsook the God who made him; salvation’s constant Rock he spurned. With foreign idols he betrayed him: God’s jealous anger fiercely burned.
6. On strange new gods or demons did they call;

with sacrifices they revered them

although they were not gods at all;

indeed, your fathers never feared them.

Your Rock and Saviour you ignored,

forgot your Maker and your Lord.

He saw his offspring's provocation

and, spurning them, said, "I will see

what end awaits this generation,

these children of iniquity."
7. “With worthless gods have they offended me, provoking me to indignation. Since they have roused my jealousy, I will requite their provocation: I’ll make them jealous and embrace instead of them some foolish race. A blaze is kindled by my fury; down into deep Sheol it spreads, consumes the earth, and will most surely make mountain roots glow fiery red.

8. “To ruin and disaster are they doomed, for I will pierce them with my arrows. By dreadful plagues they’ll be consumed, by fever and by famine harrowed, by fangs of beasts and deadly stings of swarms of loathsome crawling things. The sword shall in the streets bereave them of stalwart youth and maiden mild, and in their dwellings they shall grieve then for grey old man and newborn child.

9. “I would have blotted out their name and fame and scattered them in all directions had I not feared their foes would claim that their strong hand wrought this destruction. ‘We are the victors,’ they would scoff; ‘not God but we have cut them off.’” For they are fools, themselves deceiving, and nothing do they understand. If they were not so unperceiving, they would discern their latter end!
10. How could but one pursue a thousand men
and two dispel ten times that number,
unless their Rock abandoned them,
the LORD them no more would remember?
Our enemies themselves confess
that they no rock like ours possess.
Their vine comes from the vine of Sodom
and of Go-mor-rah’s terraces.
Their only grapes are grapes of poison;
their clusters, filled with bitterness.
11. The poison of the serpent is their wine, the cobra’s venom is their potion. “It’s in my storehouse kept confined until the day of retribution. Mine is the vengeance. At my call their foot will slip; they soon will fall.” The LORD will come with vindication; he’ll pity those who are his own when, seeing their extermination, he knows that all their strength is gone.

12. He’ll say, “Where are the gods you now await, the rock in which you sought salvation, those who your sacrifices ate, who drank the wine of your libation? Let them your help and refuge be! See now that I, yes I, am he, the only God: there is none other. With life and death at my command, I wound and heal, disperse and gather, and none can rescue from my hand.

13. “My hand to heaven uplifted, I, the LORD, now swear that, as I live forever, I’ll whet my great and glittering sword to bring to nought the foe’s endeavour; my hand on judgment shall take hold, and I’ll requite the proud and bold. Then drunk with blood shall be my arrows; then shall my sword their flesh devour. Their long-haired princes I will harrow, revealing my victorious power.”
14. O come and with his people now rejoice;

shout forth your praises, all you nations!

To thank the Lord lift up your voice

and sing your songs of jubilation.

The Lord is good, his mercy great:

his servants he will vindicate,

wreak vengeance on his adversaries.

His chosen people he has shown

the covenant love that never varies

and for their land will he atone.
HYMN 13
Do You Not Know? Have You Not Heard?
Isaiah 40:28-31

1. Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The LORD, enthroned on high,
he is the everlasting God
who made both earth and sky.

2. He will not weary or grow faint;
his power is measureless.
His wisdom is unsearchable,
and great his faithfulness.

3. The weak and weary he revives
when unto him they cry,
and those who have no might he will
with growing strength supply.

4. Though youths grow weary and may fall,
though young men strive in vain,
the LORD helps those who wait for him;
their strength they shall regain.

5. They shall mount up with eagles’ wings;
unwearied they shall run.
They’ll neither falter nor grow faint
as they in faith walk on.
HYMN 14
The Prayer of Habakkuk
Habakkuk 3

Lianglofan

Hymnal à Thonau, 1865

1. LORD, I have heard the tidings
   of you and of your might.
   Your deeds reveal your greatness;
   I tremble at their sight.
   LORD, in our time renew them;
   in our day make them known.
   In wrath remember mercy;
   do not forget your own!

2. From Teman and Mount Paran
came God, the Holy One,
and all throughout the heavens
his radiant splendour shone;
the brightness of his glory
filled all the earth with praise,
and from his hand the lightning
flashed forth in blinding rays.
3. He came with plagues before him, with fevers in his wake. He stood, the earth surveying, and made the nations quake. The everlasting mountains did crack and split and fold; the ancient hills he levelled. His ways were as of old.

4. I saw the tents of Cushan by squalls to tatters torn; the curtains of all Midian were fluttering in the storm. O LORD, were you then angry with rivers and with sea, when you rode with your horses and drove to victory?

5. When with your mighty rivers you all the earth had cleaved, the mountain ranges saw you; with fear they writhed and heaved. Then were the rushing waters in raging streams outpoured. The waves their hands uplifted; the voice of oceans roared.

6. Your glittering spear and arrows made sun and moon stand still. You, marching on in fury, made earth in terror kneel. You, trampling down the nations, came with your dreadful wrath to rescue your own people, to clear for them a path.
8. I hear your steps approaching
and at their sound I quake.
Lips quiver, bones are trembling;
I totter and I shake.
In quiet expectation
I shall await the day
when those who now invade us
will all be swept away.

Hymn 14

7. To save your own anointed
you crushed the mighty foe.
By their own weapons wounded,
their chiefs were brought low.
Advancing like a whirlwind,
they came to vanquish me.
You with your horses trampled
the surging of the sea.
9. Though fig trees may not blossom and vines no fruit may yield, though olives be a failure and barren be the field, though in the fold and stables there be no flock or herd, yet I will sing and worship, rejoicing in the LORD.

10. The LORD, my God and Saviour, in him I will rejoice, and, in his power exulting, I will lift up my voice. He makes my feet as nimble as feet of graceful roes; he lets me walk on mountains, beyond the reach of woes.
HYMN 15
Comfort, Comfort Now My People
Isaiah 40:1-5
Geneva, 1551

1. Comfort, comfort now my people;
speak of peace: so says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
mourn- ing un- der sor- row’s load.
Cry out to Je- ru- sa- lem
of the peace that waits for them;
tell her that her sins I cov- er
and her war- fare now is o- ver.

2. For the herald’s voice is crying
in the desert far and near,
calling all men to repentance,
since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning voice obey!
Now prepare for God a way.
Let the valleys rise to meet him,
and the hills bow down to greet him.
3. Then make straight what long was crooked; make the rougher places plain. Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad, and all flesh shall see the token that his word is never broken.
HYMN 16

Veni Emmanuel

O come, O come, Emmanuel

1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
   and ransom captive Israel,
   that mourns in lonely exile here,
   until the Son of God appear.
   Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
   shall come to thee, O Israel.

2. O come, O come, thou Lord of might,
   who to thy tribes, on Sinai’s height,
   in ancient times didst give the law
   in cloud and majesty and awe.
   Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
   shall come to thee, O Israel.

3. O come, thou Branch of Jesse’s stem,
   regard thine own and rescue them;
   from depths of hell thy people save,
   and give them victory o’er the grave.
   Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
   shall come to thee, O Israel.
4. O come, thou Dayspring from on high and comfort us by drawing nigh; disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

5. O come, thou who hast David’s key, save us, that we eternally in paradise regained may dwell; forever shut the gates of hell. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.
1. My soul will magnify

the Lord, who from on high

has blessed me with his favour.

His praises I will voice;

my spirit will rejoice

in him, my God and Saviour.

2. The Lord, so good and great,
looked on my lowly state.
Now will all generations
from age to age attest
how richly I am blest.
Great is my exaltation!

3. How holy is his name!
The Mighty One, he came
and showed me his great favour.
With mercy he is near
to all who him revere;
his love endures forever.
4. His arm revealed his might, for he has put to flight all those who are proud-hearted, and he pulled haughty ones down from their lofty thrones; the lowly he supported.

5. Abundant gifts the Lord has on the hungry poured; their suffering he has ended. The rich he sent away; he, much to their dismay, let them go empty-handed.

6. The Lord is merciful; his servant Israel he graciously delivered, remembering evermore what he to Abraham swore and to his seed forever.
I. Blest be the God of Israel,
for he has come to set us free;
in David's house the Lord has raised
salvation's horn for all to see.

He through his prophets long ago
said he would save us from our foe,
from all who scorn and hate us.

He has not put our fathers' faith to shame
but, in his love remembering them,
has kept the oath he swore to Abraham.
2. His faithfulness he has now shown, that we might serve him without fear, that all our days with upright hearts we in his presence might appear. Of you, my child, it will be said that God Most High sent you ahead as herald of salvation. You will before the Lord prepare his way and tell his people of the day when he to them his mercy will display.

3. As God has promised, all our sins will be forgiven, swept away. He from on high in tender love will bless us with the glorious day on which before our very eyes the radiant Morning Sun will rise to shine on us forever. From death’s dark shadow he will grant release and, when its tyranny shall cease, will guide our feet into the path of peace.
For you the burden have removed
that on their shoulders lay,
have broken the oppressor’s rod
as once on Midian’s day.
For boots by tramping soldiers worn
and garments rolled in gore
the raging flames will all consume
to mark the end of war.
3. For unto us a Child is born, 
to us a Son is given, 
and on his shoulders he shall bear 
all power in earth and heaven. 
The Wonderful, the Counsellor, 
the Mighty God is he; 
eternal Father, Prince of Peace 
his holy name shall be.

4. His government and royal power 
shall without end increase, 
and he on David’s throne shall reign 
in everlasting peace. 
On justice and on righteousness 
his kingdom he shall build. 
The Lord of hosts will show his zeal: 
his word shall be fulfilled!
HYMN 20

A Great and Mighty Wonder

Es ist ein' Ros'

1. A great and mighty wonder
up-on the earth was done
when Mar-y, vir-gin moth-er,
gave birth to God’s own Son.

Re-peat the song a-gain:
“To God on high the glo-ry,
and peace on earth to men!”

2. The Word became incarnate—
made flesh, yet very God.
The angels hailed his coming
with songs o’er fields abroad.
Repeat the song again:
“To God on high the glory,
and peace on earth to men!”

3. Sing praise to God the Father;
join with the heavenly bands.
Rejoice, O vales and mountains,
and, oceans, clap your hands!
Repeat the song again:
“To God on high the glory,
and peace on earth to men!”
4. Since he came us to ransom,
   let him now be adored,
   the King once born in Bethlehem,
   our Saviour and our Lord.
Repeat the song again:
   “To God on high the glory,
   and peace on earth to men!”

HYMN 21
While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night
Luke 2:8-14

Winchester Old
Christopher Tye, 1553

1. While shep-herds watched their flocks by night,
   all seat-ed on the ground,
   an an-gel of the Lord came down
   and glo-ry shone a-round.

2. He said to them, “Be not afraid,
   for I have come to tell
   good news of great and wondrous joy
   for all of Israel.

3. “To you in David’s town today
   was born of David’s line
   a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;
   and this will be the sign:

4. “A newborn Child you there will find,
   not as a king arrayed
   but humbly wrapped in swaddling cloths
   and in a manger laid.”
Hymn 21

5. Then with the angel, all at once,
appeared a mighty throng—
a glorious heavenly multitude,
all praising God in song:

6. “All glory to our God on high
and on the earth his peace
for men to whom he favour shows
which nevermore shall cease.”
1. Now let your servant, Lord, according to your word, depart in exultation; now I in peace may rest: my eyes have seen at last your wonderful salvation:

2. Lord, you have graciously prepared for all to see a light for revelation to Gentiles far and near, and glory bright and clear to Israel, your nation.
1. Let us of Christ our Lord and Saviour sing,
   for, though God’s equal, though eternal King,
   he did not to his rightful glory cling.
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!

2. Himself he emptied, that he us might save;
   himself for us, God’s chosen ones, he gave,
   and, born as man, our Lord became a slave.
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!

3. He bore the weakness of our human frame
   and he obedient unto death became,
   for on a cross he died, in bitter shame.
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!

4. God therefore raised him to the heavenly heights,
   bestowed on him, the Lord of life and light,
   the name surpassing every name in might.
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!

5. Let at the name of Jesus every knee,
   from heaven above to depths below the sea,
   now humbly bow before his majesty.
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!

6. Let every tongue confess that Christ is King,
   for he is Lord of all created things.
   So to the praise of God the Father sing:
   Hallelujah, hallelujah!
2. Though Christ was humbled unto death, enduring curse and shame, the Spirit vindicated him and magnified his name.

3. The angels will forevermore theirsongs of triumph sing, for they his resurrection saw; they welcomed him as King.

4. Christ Jesus conquered hell and grave; all heard the joyful news, for he was far and wide proclaimed, to Gentiles as to Jews.

5. His chosen ones believed in him throughout this hostile world. The banners of his victory he everywhere unfurled.

6. He into glory was received, for he the battle won. Now at the Father’s side he reigns: Christ Jesus, God the Son!

With Heart and Mouth Let All Confess

Gräfenberg Johann Crüger, 1653

**HYMN 24**

With Heart and Mouth Let All Confess

1. With heart and mouth let all confess that God’s eternal Son was in the flesh made manifest, did not our frailty shun.

2. Though Christ was humbled unto death, enduring curse and shame, the Spirit vindicated him and magnified his name.

3. The angels will for evermore their songs of triumph sing, for they his resurrection saw; they welcomed him as King.

4. Christ Jesus conquered hell and grave; all heard the joyful news, for he was far and wide proclaimed, to Gentiles as to Jews.

5. His chosen ones believed in him throughout this hostile world. The banners of his victory he everywhere unfurled.

6. He into glory was received, for he the battle won. Now at the Father’s side he reigns: Christ Jesus, God the Son!
2. See how he grew up like a tender plant
and sprouted from a root in arid land.
He had no form or beauty to command
our adoration.
He was despised and by mankind rejected—
a man of sorrows, burdened and afflicted.
His greatness was not noticed or respected:
we shrank from him.

3. Our sufferings and infirmities he bore;
our sorrows he was willing to endure,
while we thought he was being punished for
his own wrongdoing.

HYMN 25
Who Has Believed Our Message
Isaiah 53
Mon Dieu, mon Dieu
Strasbourg, Geneva, 1542 / Lyons, 1548

1. Who has believed our message from on high
that God’s own Son, who laid his glories by,
came down from heaven to suffer and to die
for our transgression?

Who saw revealed in him God’s power and favour—
the mighty arm of him who sent our Saviour,
that we, his people, might be free forever
from sin and shame?

2. See how he grew up like a tender plant
and sprouted from a root in arid land.
He had no form or beauty to command
our adoration.
He was despised and by mankind rejected—
a man of sorrows, burdened and afflicted.
His greatness was not noticed or respected:
we shrank from him.
But he was pierced because of our transgression, bruised for our sin: his punishments and passion procured our peace; his scourgings and oppression healed us again.

4. All we like wilful sheep have gone astray; we’ve turned, each one to his own wicked way. Thus God has charged him by his death to pay for our offences. Our shame he suffered in complete submission; he held his tongue when we showed our derision, bore us no rancour for our lack of vision and wilful wrong.

5. He opened not his mouth when foes had come to lead him to the slaughter like a lamb; he, like a sheep before its shearsers dumb, heard his accusers. He was oppressed, but then the Lord relieved him. Who of his generation then received him as sent from God because mankind had grieved him with all their sins?

6. With wicked men they him a grave assigned, but then a rich man him a tomb did find, since he had not been to deceit inclined, for he was blameless. It was God’s will to grieve him by oppression: he made his Son an offering for transgression. He, when at last he has fulfilled his mission, shall see his seed.

7. The fruit of all his suffering and pain shall he behold, contented with his gain: that men through his instruction may obtain his boundless mercy. Hence I, the Lord, reward him for his passion and many shall I make his own possession: the ones for whom he made his intercession, for whom he died.
1. You, holy Lamb of God, we bless.

You, through your cross, redemption sent us,

and to the Father you present us

as priests and kings in holiness.

O, Saviour, you have ransomed us.

Hence we will honour and adore you,

and cast in gratitude before you

the crowns by grace bestowed on us.

Amen, Amen. Hallelujah!
1. Hark how the adoring hosts above
with songs surround the throne!
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
but all their hearts are one.

2. “Worthy the Lamb that died,” they cry,
“to be exalted thus.”
“Worthy the Lamb,” let us reply,
“for he was slain for us.”

3. To thee be power divine ascribed,
for wondrous are thy ways,
and thine be wisdom, glory, might,
and everlasting praise.

4. From him who sits upon the throne
the scroll thou mayest take,
and thou art worthy as the Lamb
its seven seals to break.

5. Thou hast redeemed us with thy blood
and set the prisoners free,
hast made us kings and priests to God,
and we shall reign with thee.

6. From every kindred, every tongue,
thou brought’st thy chosen race;
and distant lands and isles have shared
the riches of thy grace.
7. Let all that dwell in heaven above
or on the earth below,
with fields and floods and ocean’s shores
to thee their homage show.

8. To him who sits upon the throne,
the God whom we adore,
and to the Lamb that once was slain
be glory evermore.
1. Salvation unto us has come
by God’s free grace and favour.
Our works cannot avert our doom;
the law can save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone,
who for his people did atone;
he is our one Redeemer.

2. What God did in his law demand
and none to him could render
caused wrath and woe on every hand
for man, the vile offender.
Our flesh has not the pure desires
God’s holy law of us requires,
and lost is our condition.

3. From sin our flesh could not abstain;
sin held its sway unceasing.
The task was hopeless and in vain;
our guilt was e’er increasing.
None can remove sin’s poisoned dart
or purify our guileful heart,
so deep is our corruption.
5. Christ Jesus full atonement made
and brought to us salvation.
Each Christian therefore may be glad
and build on this foundation.
Thy grace alone, O Lord, I plead.
Thy death is now my life indeed,
for thou hast paid my ransom.

6. Faith clings to Jesus’ work alone
and rests in him unceasing;
and by its fruits true faith is known,
with love and hope increasing.
By faith alone we’re justified;
works serve the neighbour and supply
the proof that faith is living.
Hymn 28

7. All blessing, honour, thanks, and praise
to Father, Son, and Spirit,
the God who saved us by his grace;
all glory to his merit!
O Triune God in heaven above,
who hast revealed thy saving love,
thy blessed name be hallowed.
1. All glory, laud, and honour

to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children
made loud Hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou, David’s royal Son,
who in the Lord’s name comest,
the King and Blessed One.

2. The multitudes of angels
are praising thee on high;
let man and all creation
to them with joy reply.
The people near Jerusalem
with palms before thee went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present.
3. To thee before thy passion
    they sang their hymns of praise;
    to thee, now high exalted,
    our melody we raise.
    Thou didst accept their praises;
    accept the prayers we bring,
    who in all good delightest,
    thou good and gracious King.
2. It was a strange and dreadful strife
when life and death contended.
The victory remained with life;
the reign of death was ended.
Holy Scripture plainly says
his death has swallowed up our death;
its sting is lost forever! Alleluia!
3. Here the true Paschal Lamb we see, whom God so freely gave us. He died on the accursèd tree – so strong his love – to save us. See, his blood now marks our door; faith points to it, death passes o’er, and Satan cannot harm us. Alleluia!

4. So let us keep the festival to which the Lord invites us. Christ is himself the joy of all, the Sun that warms and lights us. Now his grace to us imparts eternal sunshine to our hearts. The night of sin is ended. Alleluia!

5. Then let us feast this joyful day on Christ, the bread of heaven. The Word of grace has purged away the old and wicked leaven. Christ alone our souls will feed; he is our food and drink indeed; faith lives upon no other. Alleluia!
HYMN 31A

Christ Has Risen! Hallelujah!

Soll' ich meinem Gott

Johann Schop, 1641

1. Christ has risen! Hallelujah!

He is our victorious Head.

Sing his praises! Hallelujah!

Christ has risen from the dead.

He has conquered sin and Satan.

Where, O death, is now your sting?

Jesus Christ alone is King!

Christ has risen! Hallelujah!

He is our victorious Head.

Christ has risen from the dead.
2. Christ has risen! He, our Saviour, freed us from the powers of hell. We are his! In him forever we have triumphed over all. Sun of Righteousness and Glory, dawning with your healing light, you have put all gloom to flight! Christ has risen! Hallelujah! He is our victorious Head. Christ has risen from the dead.
1. Christ has risen! Hallelujah!

He is our victorious Head.

Sing his praises! Hallelujah!

Christ has risen from the dead.

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Where, O death, is now your sting?

Jesus Christ alone is King!

Christ has risen! Hallelujah!

He is our victorious Head.

Christ has risen from the dead.
2. Christ has risen! He, our Saviour, freed us from the powers of hell. We are his! In him forever we have triumphed over all. Sun of Righteousness and Glory, dawning with your healing light, you have put all gloom to flight! Christ has risen! Hallelujah! He is our victorious Head. Christ has risen from the dead.
1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
   All creation join to say, Alleluia!
   Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
   Sing, you heavens, and earth, reply, Alleluia!

2. Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!
   Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
   Once he died, our souls to save, Alleluia!
   Where your victory, O grave? Alleluia!

3. Christ’s redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
   Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
   Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
   Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

4. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!
   Praise to you by all be given, Alleluia!
   Risen Christ, triumphant now, Alleluia!
   Every knee to you shall bow, Alleluia!
This line to be sung before first stanza only.

1. The strife is o’er, the battle done;  
   the victory of life is won;  
   the song of triumph has begun. Al-le-lu-ia!

2. The powers of death have done their worst,  
   but Christ their legions has dispersed;  
   let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

3. The three sad days are quickly sped;  
   he rises glorious from the dead;  
   all glory to our risen Head. Alleluia!

4. Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee,  
   from death’s dread sting thy servants free,  
   that we may live and sing to thee. Alleluia!

HYMN 33
The Strife is O’er, the Battle Done
Victory
Giovanni da Palestrina, 1591
2. His body unto death he gave and then was buried in the grave, but rose again victoriously and freed us from all slavery. Alleluia!

3. The gloomy darkness, sin, and death are conquered, as the Scripture says, by Jesus Christ, the risen Lord; who brought back light, and life restored. Alleluia!

4. Come, let us all rejoice and sing, for death has lost its bitter sting, thanks to the Lord, the sacrificed and resurrected Jesus Christ. Alleluia!
1. If God is on our side, against us shall be none.

He did not spare his own, his well-beloved Son,
but gave him up for us, that he might save us truly.

Will he with him not give us all things free and fully?

Who then will yet accuse those whom he has elected?

’Tis God who justifies in Christ, the Resurrected.

2. None will condemn us now! Christ Jesus, he who died—yes, rather, who was raised—sits at his Father’s side and intercedes for us; he will forsake us never. Who from the love of Christ shall separate us ever? Shall persecution, shall distress, or tribulation, or nakedness, or sword, or peril, or starvation?

3. ’Tis written, “For your sake they kill us all day long; we are considered sheep by haters fierce and strong; we’re being put to death and driven to the slaughter.” All day we are disgraced, we are poured out like water, but yet in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved his own, our Saviour great and glorious.
4. I am convinced that neither powers, death, nor life,
nor angels, things to come, things present, princes, strife,
nor height, nor depth, nor any other thing created
will from the love of God now keep us separated—
his love in Jesus Christ, the Saviour whom he gave us,
that through his precious blood he might redeem and save us.
1. The God and Father of our Lord  
be blest for ever-more.

Great is the mercy he has shown:  
him honour and adore!

2. He caused us to be born anew:  
a living hope he gave  
through Jesus Christ, who rose again  
triumphant from the grave.

3. The inheritance in store for us  
is free from all decay;  
it cannot spoil or be defiled;  
it will not fade away.

4. It's safely kept in heaven for us  
whom God's own power will shield,  
till full salvation is at last  
on his great day revealed.
2. Hallelujah! The praises tell
of David’s Son, Emmanuel,
the Saviour, God incarnate.
In him, who will return again,
let all the universe acclaim
the Father, Son, and Spirit.
1. Since our great High Priest, Christ Jesus,
bears the name above all names,
reigning Son of God, surpassing other titles, powers, and claims;
since to heaven our Lord has passed,
let us hold our witness fast!

2. Since we have a priest who suffered,
knowing weakness, tears, and pain;
who, like us was tried and tempted;
unlike us, without a stain;
since he shared our lowly place,
let us boldly seek his grace!

3. Sacrifice and suffering over,
now he sits at God’s right hand,
crowned with praise, no more an outcast,
his pre-eminence long planned;
such a great High Priest we have,
strong to help, supreme to save!

HYMN 38
Since Our Great High Priest, Christ Jesus
Hebrews 1:3-4; 4:14-16; 12:2

All Saints Darmstadt, 1698

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4. Love’s example, hope’s attraction,
faith’s beginning and its end,
pioneer of our salvation,
mighty advocate and friend;
Jesus, now in glory raised,
our ascended Lord, be praised!
2. “Let not your hearts with anxious thoughts
be troubled or dismayed.
Believe in God, believe in me
and trust my gracious aid.

3. “I to my Father’s house now go,
where many dwellings are.
As I have told you, there I will
a place for you prepare.

4. “For one day I shall come again
to take you unto me;
where I, your Lord and Saviour, am,
there you shall also be.

5. “I am the way, the truth, the life.
There is not anyone
who shall to God the Father come
except by me, the Son.”
2. The heavens with joy received their Lord, 
by saints, by angel hosts adored. 
O day of exultation! 
O earth, adore your glorious King! 
Let us of his ascension sing 
with joy and adoration.

3. Our great High Priest is present now 
where all before God’s glory bow: 
the Father’s throne in heaven. 
There he still has our human flesh, 
and we as counterpledge possess 
the Spirit he has given.
4. We lift our hearts to Christ on high,  
   for he who laid his glory by  
   is King of all creation.  
   Appearing as his church’s Head,  
   he rules the living and the dead  
   and judges every nation.

5. From heaven he sent his Spirit down  
   who gives rich gifts to us his own,  
   gifts from his treasure taken.  
   Protecting us from Satan’s lure,  
   Christ keeps us by his power secure;  
   we’ll never be forsaken.
1. Christ, above all glory seated,

King triumphant, strong to save!

Dying, you have death defeated;

Buried, you have spoiled the grave.

You have gone where now is given

What no mortal might could gain,

On the eternal throne of heaven,

In your Father’s power to reign.

2. There your kingdoms all adore you,

Heaven above and earth below;

While the depths of hell before you,

Trembling and defeated, bow.

We revere you, Lord and Saviour;

We implore your grace and love.

Hear our prayers and help us ever

Seek the things that are above.
3. Lord, when you return in glory
   on the clouds of heaven above,
   we your flock will stand before you,
   kept forever in your love.
   In your faithfulness confiding,
   Jesus, all shall you adore.
   On your holy throne abiding,
   you shall reign for evermore.

HYMN 42
Where High the Heavenly Temple Stands
Hebrews 4:14-16

Erhalt uns, Herr

1. Where high the heavenly temple stands,
   the house of God not made with hands,
   Christ has the greatest honour gained,
   yet very God and man remained.

2. Our great High Priest, our Saviour, Lord,
   gives to his saints on earth support,
   since he through all the heavens has passed.
   To this confession we hold fast.

3. Our Surety and our Lord is he
   who shed his blood on Calvary,
   who now enthroned at God’s right hand
   completes the work which God has planned.
5. He, too, was tempted, suffered pain; yet free from sin did he remain. He who did all temptation thwart now takes our misery to heart.

6. Let us then boldly seek God’s face, there to find mercy, help, and grace: our great High Priest will intercede, come to our aid in time of need.
HYMN 43
Lo, What a Cloud of Witnesses
Hebrews 12:1-3
St. Flavian John Day, 1562

1. Lo, what a cloud of witnesses
   compass us around!
   Men once like us with sufferings tried,
   but now with glory crowned.

2. They reached the finish of the course
   and thus obtained the rest.
   We too – for God fulfils his word –
   shall be with victory blest.

3. Let us then full of confidence
   run to complete the race
   and put off sin and every weight
   which could slow down our pace.

4. We look to Jesus even more
   than to all those around;
   in him, the Author of our faith,
   its Finisher is found.

5. He, for the joy before him set –
   unselfish is his love –
   endured the cross, despised the shame,
   and now he reigns above.

6. Let us, forgetting things behind,
   press on to God’s right hand;
   there, with the Saviour and his saints,
   triumphantly to stand.
HYMN 44
Rejoice, the Lord Is King

Darwall’s 148th
John Darwall, 1770

1. Rejoice, the Lord is King;
your Lord and King adore.
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing,
and triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
again I say: Rejoice! Rejoice!

2. Jesus the Saviour reigns;
to him let praises ring.
The Christ who once was slain
rose as victorious King.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
again I say: Rejoice! Rejoice!

3. His kingdom cannot fail;
he rules o’er earth and heaven.
The keys of death and hell
are to Christ Jesus given.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
again I say: Rejoice! Rejoice!

4. He sits at God’s right hand,
till all his foes submit,
and bow to his command,
and fall beneath his feet.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
again I say: Rejoice! Rejoice!

5. Rejoice, he comes again.
The Lord will not delay.
He who from heaven reigns
will come on his great day.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
again I say: Rejoice! Rejoice!

HYMN 45
Jesus Shall Reign

1. Jesus shall reign wher’er the sun
does its successive journeys run,
his kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
till moons shall wax and wane no more.

2. Blessings abound where’er he reigns:
the prisoners leap to lose their chains,
the weary find eternal rest,
and all who suffer want are blest.

3. Let every creature rise and bring
the highest honours to our King,
angels descend with songs again,
and earth repeat the loud amen.
HYMN 46

Christ Shall Have Dominion

King of Glory

Psalms 72:8-19

Albert Piersma, 1933

1. Christ shall have dominion over land and sea;
   earth’s remotest regions shall his kingdom be.
   They that wilds inhabit shall their worship bring;
   kings shall bring their tribute, nations serve our King.

2. When the needy seek him, he will mercy show;
   then the weak and helpless shall his pity know.
   He will surely save them from oppression’s might,
   for their lives are precious in his holy sight.

3. Ever and forever shall his name endure;
   long as time continues it shall stand secure,
   and in him forever nations shall be blessed,
   and all peoples hail him King of kings confessed.

4. Unto God Almighty joyful Zion sings;
   he alone is glorious, doing wondrous things.
   Evermore, O people, bless his glorious name,
   his eternal glory through the earth proclaim.
1. He has come, the Holy Spirit!

Jesus left us not alone

when he went up to inherit

might and glory on the throne,

for he sent the one he promised:

Holy Spirit, Power of God.

Let us spread this truth abroad

and unceasingly declare it.

Let us now our voices raise:

to the Spirit we give praise.
2. Praise the Spirit who, proceeding
from the Father and the Son,
in the truth the church is leading.

Let us praise him, everyone—
him who is both Gift and Giver,
him the Sender sent to earth,
Holy God and yet poured forth!
Praise, O people, him forever:
he true life to you imparts,
for he dwells within your hearts.
3. Praise the Spirit who will never
leave the church by blood once bought.
He will show his presence ever,
fierce though be the foe’s assault.
Fear not, flock which he is keeping,
though encircled by the night;
child of God, recall his might.
Would the Spirit then be sleeping?
Would he not securely keep
those whom Christ bought as his sheep?

4. Spirit of all understanding,
of all grace, of truth, and prayer,
show the paths of life unending;
always guide us, everywhere.
May we say, yes, “Abba, Father,”
say of Jesus, “You are Lord,”
and praise you with one accord.
Be where Christ his churches gathers,
take the offerings that they bring,
hear them when your praise they sing.

5. Counsellor, O Holy Spirit,
you who were from heaven sent,
may you with our Saviour’s merit
fill the earth’s remotest end.
O revive, refresh, and nourish
all that here may fade and fail!
Let your healing wind prevail,
causing love and zeal to flourish.
To new life let us be raised.
Holy Spirit, you be praised!
2. The gospel of salvation
God has to us revealed,
and we, the Word believing,
were with the Spirit sealed.
What none had seen or heard of
has been to us declared;
what no man had imagined
God has for us prepared.

1. Come praise the Holy Spirit!
The prophets he inspired;
they after our salvation
unceasingly inquired.

They spoke of Christ our Saviour,
of grace that was to be,
proclaimed to us the wonders
which angels long to see.

HYMN 48
Come, Praise the Holy Spirit!
I Peter 1:10-12; Ephesians 1:13; I Corinthians 2:9; Galatians 5:18, 22; Romans 8:16-17, 23-25
Thornbury Basil Harwood, 1895

Basil Harwood, 1895
3. Led by the Holy Spirit, our flesh we crucify; in him shall we find freedom as unto sin we die. O Spirit, by your power our faithfulness increase, and reap in us your harvest of love and joy and peace.

4. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” the Spirit witness bears that God made us his children and we, with Christ, are heirs. The Spirit, as the firstfruits of glorious liberty, helps us await with patience what we do not yet see.
2. He on the church of Christ our Lord
his many varied gifts outpoured,
that, without pride or malice, we
might one another’s members be.

3. The Spirit, knowing all our needs,
perfects our prayers and intercedes
for us, who cannot on our own
gain access to God’s holy throne.

4. He is himself the guarantee
that we shall be forever free
when Christ returns on his great day.
“O come, Lord Jesus, come,” we pray.
1. The Spirit came, as promised, in God’s appointed hour; and now to each believer he comes in love and power. And by his Holy Spirit, God seals us as his own, and through the Son and Spirit it makes access to his throne.

2. The Spirit makes our bodies the temple of the Lord. He binds us all together in faith and true accord. The Spirit in his greatness brings power from God above, and with the Son and Father dwells in our hearts in love.

3. He bids us live together in unity and peace; employ his gifts in blessing, and let base passions cease. We should not grieve the Spirit by open sin or shame, nor let our words and actions deny his holy name.

4. The Word, the Spirit’s weapon, will bring all sin to light; and prayer, by his directing, will give new joy and might. Be filled then with his Spirit, live out God’s will and Word; rejoice with hymns and singing, make music to the Lord.
2. If we endure, so Christ has said, we’ll also reign with him, our Head. If we on earth his name betray, he will disown us on his day.

3. If we are faithless and we stray, he faithful will remain for aye, for he cannot himself deny. On Christ our Saviour we rely.
1. The church’s one foundation

is Jesus Christ her Lord;

she is his new creation

by water and the Word.

From heaven he came and sought her

to be his holy bride;

with his own blood he bought her

and for her life he died.

2. Elect from every nation,
yet one o’er all the earth,
her charter of salvation
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.
3. Though with a scornful wonder
men see her sore oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping,
their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

4. Mid toil and tribulation
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious
shall be the church at rest.
5. Yet, she on earth has union with God, the Three in One, and under his dominion have saints their triumphs won. They us in our endeavour here like a cloud surround till we, with them, forever shall be with glory crowned.
HYMN 53
A Mighty Fortress is Our God

Ein Feste Burg

Martin Luther, 1529

1. A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our Helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.

For still our ancient foe
doth seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate.

On earth is not his equal.
2. Did we in our own strength confide, 
our striving would be losing, 
were not the right Man on our side, 
the Man of God’s own choosing. 
Dost ask who that may be? 
Christ Jesus, it is he; 
Lord Sabaoth his name, 
from age to age the same, 
and he must win the battle.

3. And though this world, with devils filled, 
should threaten to undo us, 
we will not fear, for God has willed 
his truth to triumph through us. 
The prince of darkness grim, 
we tremble not for him; 
his rage we can endure, 
for lo! his doom is sure; 
one little word shall fell him.

4. That word above all earthly powers – 
no thanks to them – abideth; 
the Spirit and the gifts are ours 
through him who with us sideth. 
Let goods and kindred go, 
this mortal life also; 
the body they may kill, 
God’s truth abideth still; 
his kingdom is forever.
HYMN 54
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Psalms 90:1-6

1. O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home.

2. Under the shadow of thy throne
the saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is thy arm alone,
and our defence is sure.

3. Before the hills in order stood,
or earth received her frame,
from everlasting thou art God,
to endless years the same.

4. Thy Word commands our flesh to dust,
"Return, ye sons of men";
al nations rose from earth at first,
and turn to earth again.

5. A thousand ages in thy sight
are like an evening gone;
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

6. The busy tribes of flesh and blood
with all their lives and cares
are carried downwards by thy flood
and lost in following years.
7. Like flowery fields the nations stand
pleased with the morning light;
the flowers beneath the mower’s hand
lie withering ere ’tis night.

8. O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
be thou our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home.

HYMN 55
Who Trusts in God, a Strong Abode

Was mein Gott will
Claudin de Sermisy, 1529

1. Who trusts in God, a strong abode
in heaven and earth possess-es;
who looks in love to Christ a-bove,
no fear his heart oppress-es.

In thee a-lone, O Lord, we own
our hope and con-so-la-tion,
our shield from foes, our balm for woes,
our great and sure sal-va-tion.
3. In all the strife of mortal life
our feet shall stand securely;
temptation’s hour shall lose its power,
for thou shalt guard us surely.
O God, each day direct our way;
renew us by thy Spirit
until we stand at thy right hand
through Jesus’ saving merit.
HYMN 56
Loving Shepherd of Thy Sheep

Song 13 Orlando Gibbons, 1623

1. Loving Shepherd of thy sheep,
   all thy lambs in safety keep;
   nothing can thy power withstand,
   none can pluck them from thy hand.

2. May they praise thee every day,
   gladly all thy will obey;
   like thy blessed ones above,
   happy in thy precious love.

3. Loving Shepherd, ever near,
   teach thy lambs thy voice to hear;
   suffer not their steps to stray
   from the straight and narrow way.

4. Where thou leadest may they go,
   walking in thy steps below;
   then, before thy Father’s throne,
   Saviour, claim them for thine own.
1. We praise you, Lord, for Jesus Christ, who died and rose again; he lives, he broke the power of sin and over death now reigns.

2. We praise you, Lord, that this dear child is grafted to the vine, and as a member of your house, now bears the cross as sign.

3. We praise you, Lord, for Jesus Christ: he loves this child we bring; he frees, forgives, and heals us all; he lives and reigns as King.
1. Our children, Lord, in faith and prayer

we now present to thee;

let them thy covenant mercies share

and thy salvation see.

2. Such helpless babes Christ did embrace,
while dwelling here below;
to us and ours, O God of grace,
the same compassion show.

3. As they grow up, their hearts secure
from worldly snares, we pray;
O let them to the end endure
in every righteous way.
2. Come, let us then with contrite hearts draw near
to seek the pledges of his mercy here.
He who his saints in this world rules and shields
to all believers life eternal yields,
with heavenly bread makes those who hunger whole,
gives living waters to the thirsty soul.
Let us his holy supper celebrate
and, so refreshed, our coming King await.

HYMN 59
Come, Take by Faith the Body of the Lord

1. Come, take by faith the body of the Lord,
and drink the blood of Christ, for us out-poured.
Praise and confess the wonders of his grace:
to rescue us, he suffered in our place.
Led to the slaughter as the Lamb of God,
our Saviour bought us with his precious blood.
Remember how he bore our curse and shame;
until he comes, let us his death proclaim.

2. Come, let us then with contrite hearts draw near
to seek the pledges of his mercy here.
He who his saints in this world rules and shields
to all believers life eternal yields,
with heavenly bread makes those who hunger whole,
gives living waters to the thirsty soul.
Let us his holy supper celebrate
and, so refreshed, our coming King await.
1. By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,
   him who was cursed we now adore,
   and mark the death of our dear Lord
   until He comes.

2. His body, offered in our stead,
   is shown in this memorial bread,
   and thus our contrite souls are fed
   until he comes.

3. His lifeblood shed for us we see
   poured out for us, undoubtedly,
   as wine we drink in memory
   until he comes.

4. Thus, by his suffering Christ achieved
   that we the Spirit have received,
   and unity, as brothers, gained
   until he comes.

5. When soon the final trumpet’s heard
   and all the ancient graves are stirred,
   then, with the great commanding word,
   the Lord shall come.

6. Then, once again, we’ll celebrate.
   Let not our hearts be desolate
   but, strong in faith, in patience wait
   until he comes.
HYMN 61

We Thank You, Father! You Have Planted

Daar is uit 's werelds duistre wolken

Johannes G. Bastiaans, 1868

1. We thank you, Father! You have planted
your holy name within our hearts.

True knowledge, faith, and life immortal
Jesus your Son to us imparts.

You, Lord, have made all for your pleasure;
you gave man food for all his days,
giving in Christ the Bread eternal.
Yours is the power, yours be the praise.

2. Watch o’er your church, O Lord, in mercy;
save it from evil, guard it still.
Perfect it in your love, unite it,
cleansed and conformed unto your will.
As grain, once scattered on the hillsides,
was in the broken bread made one,
so from all lands your church be gathered
into your kingdom by your Son.
2. By this promise that you love us,  
by your gift of peace restored,  
by your call to heaven above us,  
hallow all our lives, O Lord.

3. In your service, Lord, defend us;  
in our hearts keep watch, O Lord.  
In the world to which you send us,  
let your kingdom come, O Lord.
2. Your name be hallowed and adored.
Teach us to know you from your Word
and from your glorious works and ways,
that we might offer you our praise.
May our whole life enhance your fame,
that others, too, might praise your name.

3. Lord, may your kingdom come with haste;
lay Satan’s dark domain to waste.
May you so rule us by your Word
that we acknowledge you as Lord.
Preserve your church, make her complete
until all worship at your feet.
4. O Father, may your will be done on earth below by everyone. May we deny our wilful way, and, without murmuring, you obey. In all our duties, Lord, may we, like heaven’s angels, faithful be.

5. Give us this day our daily bread, that we may from your hand be fed. In all the work we need to do remind us to depend on you, not trusting creatures here below, but you from whom all blessings flow.

6. Do not our sins and debts record, but freely pardon them, O Lord. Cleanse us from all our wretchedness through Christ, whose blood was shed for us – as, prompted by the grace you give, our neighbours’ debts we, too, forgive.

7. Into temptation lead us not, lest we in Satan’s snares be caught. Uphold us by your Spirit’s might; put mortal enemies to flight. May we against our foes contend and be victorious in the end.

8. Yours is the kingdom, yours the might, and yours alone the glory bright! All this we ask of you, our King, for you are Lord of everything in this age and eternally. Amen, Amen, so shall it be!
2. My faithful Saviour keeps me in his care; without my Father’s will cannot a hair fall from my head; he shall for me prepare a heavenly habitation. All things must serve to further my salvation. His Holy Spirit brings me consolation; he makes me willing now with dedication in hope his yoke to bear.
2. Will anxious care or bitter sighing at any time give true relief? And what avails us our decrying each morning’s evil, trouble, grief? We only add to grief and stress by discontent and bitterness.

3. Be still! What God in his good pleasure to you in wisdom may impart is given you in perfect measure; thus be content within your heart. To him who chose us for his own our needs and wants are surely known.

4. With song and prayer, in faith progressing, in all you do God’s will obey. Expect from him alone your blessing: he will renew it every day, for God will never those disown who put their trust in him alone.

HYMN 65

Wer nur den lieben Gott

Georg Neumark, 1657

If You But Let the Father Guide You
Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Faithfulness

William M. Runyan, 1923

1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
   there is no shadow of turning with thee;
   thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
   as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

   Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
   Morning by morning new mercies I see;
   all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
   Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
   sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
   join with all nature in manifold witness
   to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

   Refrain
3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, 
thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide, 
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow – 
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

Refrain may be sung after last stanza only.

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2. Come, O Lord, with power and glory
and descend before our eyes
when the sounding of the trumpet
shall re-echo through the skies
and the voice of your archangel
shall command the dead to rise.

3. When the sky is rent asunder
and your face we shall behold,
when to every tongue and nation
you your judgment will unfold,
death will be completely vanquished,
as your holy Word foretold.

HYMN 67
Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!

Lauda Anima
John Goss, 1869

1. “Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!”
pray the Spirit and the Bride.
Come upon the clouds of heaven
with your angels at your side.
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!
Evermore with us abide.
4. Call the dead! Let them bear witness to your rule, O Lord renowned. Call those once forced into silence, those who once were judged unsound. Lift up all who were downtrodden; let them be with honour crowned.

5. When the tombs at last break open and the throngs from far and near, gathering in your holy city, in your festal hall appear, Lord, let us then not be missing, though we’re often tardy here.

6. Then let your refining Spirit us with flaming zeal endue. May we wait with eager longing for your promise to come true when you, Lord, with fire from heaven all creation will renew.

7. No one knows the day or moment when the Bridegroom shall appear. Let us then be ever watchful; may our lamps be bright and clear. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! Your great Day is drawing near.
2. We are flesh and must return
to the dust whence we were taken,
but we from the Scriptures learn
that from death we shall awaken:
We like buried seed that dies
shall unto new life arise.

3. What into the earth we sow,
standing at the graveside grieving,
is the seed that soon will grow,
glory from our God receiving.
He to every grain here sown
gives a body of its own.
4. What is weak and mortal here, 
    prey to illness and destruction, 
    shall with glorious power appear 
    in the hour of resurrection. 
    What today is sown disgraced 
    in great honour shall be raised.

5. God his own shall glorify 
    in a wondrous transformation. 
    Though not all of us may die, 
    all shall gain their full salvation 
    in the twinkling of an eye 
    when the Lord comes from on high.

6. When we hear the trumpet’s sound 
    and the dead are raised immortal, 
    we shall see with joy profound 
    how the grave must serve as portal 
    leading past all woe and strife 
    into everlasting life.

7. Then the word shall be fulfilled, 
    once by ancient prophets spoken: 
    “See how Satan’s might is quelled, 
    how the power of death lies broken. 
    Where, O death, is now your sting?” 
    Christ has conquered! He is King!

8. To our God be thanks and praise: 
    he through Christ made us victorious. 
    Be then steadfast all your days; 
    see how death’s defeat assures us 
    that in him who comes again 
    all your toil is not in vain.
2. From all their labours now they rest,
in God’s eternal glory blest.
They see their Saviour face to face,
and sing the triumphs of his grace;
him day and night they ceaseless praise,
to him the loud thanksgiving raise:

3. “Worthy the Lamb, for sinners slain,
through endless years to live and reign.
Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood,
and made us kings and priests to God.”
O may we wage the glorious strife,
and win, like them, the crown of life.
1. Day of judgment! Day of wonders!

Hark! The trumpet’s awesome sound,

Louder than a thousand thunders,

Shakes the vast creation round.

How the summons will the sinner’s heart confound!

2. See the Judge, our nature wearing,
clothed in majesty divine;
you who long for his appearing
then shall say, “This God is mine!”
Gracious Saviour, own me in that day as thine.

3. At his call the dead awaken,
rise to life from earth and sea;
all the evildoers, shaken
by his looks, prepare to flee.
Careless sinner, what will then become of thee?

4. But to those who have confessèd,
loved and served the Lord below,
he will say, “Come near, you blessèd,
see the kingdom I bestow;
you forever shall my love and glory know.”
HYMN 71
The Hope of Faith Shall Not Deceive Us
Rendez à Dieu
Geneva, 1543/1551

1. The hope of faith shall not deceive us;
the Saviour’s words are true and sure.
Our friends on earth may fail and leave us,
but Jesus’ faithfulness endures.
Who limits his dominion ever?
He rules creation from on high;
all that his love and grace endeavour
shall him his power not deny.

2. That hope must soften all our sorrow.
Come, fellow-pilgrims, heads then high;
for those who bide salvation’s morrow
the hills are level, seas are dry.
O blessedness above all measure,
O joy when once all grief is banned.
There is our heart, there is our treasure,
when we are in the Promised Land.
1. Behold the amazing gift of love 
   the Father has bestowed 
   on us, the sinful sons of men, 
   to call us sons of God.

2. Concealed as yet this honour lies; 'tis to the world unknown, for this world knew not him who came as God's eternal Son.

3. We are God's children here and now, for he made us his own, but what we shall hereafter be, that he has not yet shown.

4. We know that when our Lord appears, then we like him shall be, for then his face, him as he is, we shall in glory see.

5. Now everyone who has this hope, which rests in him secure, from evil purifies himself as he, our Lord, is pure.
1. Lo, what a glorious sight appeared before admire eyes: the former seas had passed away, the former earth and skies. From heaven the new Jerusalem came, for Christ as bride prepared. A voice resounding from the throne these wondrous things declared:

2. “Now God in glory down to men has moved his blest abode. He dwells with them; his people they, and he his people’s God. His gracious hand shall wipe the tears from every weeping eye, for pain and grief shall be no more, and death itself shall die.”
3. The One who sat upon the throne said, “I make all things new!
Write down the words that you have heard, for they are firm and true.
It is all done! Lo, by my power is paradise restored.
I am the First, and I the Last, the one eternal Lord.

4. “Come, all who thirst! To you I will my healing waters give. Drink from my fountain without price and so forever live. Blest is the man who, conquering, his heritage has won, for I will be his faithful God, and he shall be my son.

5. “As for the vile and faithless ones, those who my will defy, they, flung into the burning lake, the second death shall die.” We, too, shall stand before the throne; then shall our names be found recorded in the book of life. How shall our joy abound!
2. A weight of glory, unsurpassed, 
will then be ever ours at last, 
for we find no security 
in things that with our eyes we see; 
for what is seen will fade away, 
what is unseen will not decay.

3. We know that if our earthly tent 
falls to the ground, all worn and rent, 
our God as gift to us extends 
a heavenly house not made with hands, 
a building steadfast and secure 
that will eternally endure.

4. The Spirit we as pledge possess 
of everlasting blessedness. 
So let us of good courage be; 
our God himself will make us free. 
Let it be here and now our aim 
to please him and exalt his name.

HYMN 74
Our Outer Nature Wastes Away
Il Corinthians 4:16-5:1ff
Melita
John B. Dykes, 1861

1. Our outer nature wastes away; 
yet inwardly, from day to day, 
we are in you renewed, O Lord.

Our suffering here is soon endured:
the harvest it for us prepares
by far outweighs our woes and cares.

2. A weight of glory, unsurpassed, 
will then be ever ours at last, 
for we find no security 
in things that with our eyes we see; 
for what is seen will fade away, 
what is unseen will not decay.

3. We know that if our earthly tent 
falls to the ground, all worn and rent, 
our God as gift to us extends 
a heavenly house not made with hands, 
a building steadfast and secure 
that will eternally endure.

4. The Spirit we as pledge possess 
of everlasting blessedness. 
So let us of good courage be; 
our God himself will make us free. 
Let it be here and now our aim 
to please him and exalt his name.
2. Christ is risen, Christ the firstfruits of the holy harvest field, which will all its full abundance at his second coming yield. Then the golden ears of harvest will their heads before him wave, ripened by his glorious sunshine from the furrows of the grave.
Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

Glo - ry to the Three in One:

Glo - ry to the Fa- ther, and the Sav - iour,

who the vic - tor - y has won.

Glo - ry to the Ho - ly Spir - it,

fount of love and sanc - ti - ty.

Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

to the Tri - une Ma - jes - ty.
2. All this world is God's own field,
fruit unto his praise to yield –
wheat and tares, together sown,
unto joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear,
then shall golden grain appear.
Lord of harvest, grant that we
pure and wholesome wheat may be.
4. Lord, we pray thee, quickly come; bear thy final harvest home. Gather thou thy people in, freed from sorrow, freed from sin. They, forever purified, in thy presence will abide. Come with all thy angels, come; bear thy glorious harvest home.

Hymn 76

3. For the Son of Man shall come and shall take his harvest home. From his field he shall that day all of-fences purge a-way, give his an-gels charge at last in-to fire the tares to cast but the fruit-ful grain to store in his gar-ner ev-er-more.

4. Lord, we pray thee, quickly come; bear thy final harvest home. Gather thou thy people in, freed from sorrow, freed from sin. They, forever purified, in thy presence will abide. Come with all thy angels, come; bear thy glorious harvest home.
1. We praise thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before thee, we kneel and adore thee;
we bless thy holy name, glad praises we sing.

2. We worship thee, God of our fathers, we bless thee;
through life’s storm and tempest our Guide hast thou been.
When perils o’ertake us, escape thou wilt make us,
and with thy help, O Lord, our battles we win.

3. With voices united our praises we offer;
to thee, great Deliverer, glad anthems we raise.
Thy strong arm will guide us, our God is beside us;
to thee, our great Redeemer, fore’er be praise.
HYMN 78
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
   O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
   Come all who hear, now to his temple draw near;
   join me in glad adoration.

2. Praise to the Lord, who o’er all things is wondrously reigning,
   sheltering you under his wings, oh, so gently sustaining!
   Have you not seen all that is needful has been sent by his gracious ordaining?

3. Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you.
   Surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
   Ponder anew what the Almighty will do;
   he with his love will befriend you.

4. Praise to the Lord, who with marvellous wisdom has made you,
   blessed you with health, and with loving hand guided and stayed you.
   How oft in grief has he not brought you relief,
   spreading his wings to o’ershade you!

5. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
   All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
   Let the Amen sound from his people again.
   Gladly forever adore him!
HYMN 79

We Come, O Christ, to You

Eastview

James V. Lee, 1959

1. We come, O Christ, to you, true Son of God and man,
by whom all things consist, in whom all life began.
In you alone we live and move
and have our being in your love.

2. You are the way to God, your blood our ransom paid;
in you we face our Judge and Maker unafraid.
Before the throne absolved we stand;
your love has met your law’s demand.

3. You are the living truth; all wisdom dwells in you,
the source of every skill, the one eternal True!
O great I AM! in you we rest,
sure answer to our every quest.

4. You only are true life – to know you is to live
the more abundant life that earth can never give.
O risen Lord! we live in you:
in us each day your life renew!

5. We worship you, Lord Christ, our Saviour and our King;
to you our youth and strength adoringly we bring:
so fill our hearts that all may view
your life in us and turn to you!

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2. Give to the Lord of lords renown;
   the King of kings with glory crown.
   His mercies ever shall endure,
   when lords and kings are known no more.

3. He built the earth, he spread the sky,
   and fixed the starry lights on high.
   Wonders of grace to God belong;
   repeat his mercies in your song.

4. He fills the sun with morning light;
   he bids the moon direct the night.
   His mercies ever shall endure,
   when sun and moon shall shine no more.

5. He sent his Son with power to save
   from guilt and darkness and the grave.
   Wonders of grace to God belong;
   repeat his mercies in your song.

6. He through this world will guide his own,
   and lead us to his holy throne.
   His mercies ever shall endure,
   when this dark world shall be no more.
HYMN 81
O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing
Azmon Carl G. Gläser, 1828

1. O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer’s praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace!

2. My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad,
the honours of your name.

3. The name of Jesus calms our fears
and bids our sorrows cease;
’tis music to the sinner’s ears,
’tis life and health and peace.

4. He breaks the power of reigning sin,
he sets the prisoner free;
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood avails for me.

5. He speaks, and, listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful broken hearts rejoice;
the humble poor believe.

6. Hear him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,
your loosened tongues employ;
you blind, behold your Saviour come;
and leap, you lame, for joy!
7. To God all glory, praise, and love

be now and ever given

by saints below and saints above,

the church in earth and heaven.
HYMN 82

All Glory Be to Thee, Most High

1. All glory be to thee, Most High,
   to thee all adoration;
   in grace and truth hast thou drawn nigh
   to grant us thy salvation.

   Thou show-est thy good will to men,
   and peace shall reign on earth again;
   we praise thy name forever.

2. We praise thee and in thee we trust;
   we give thee thanks forever,
   O Father, for thy rule is just
   and wise, and changes never.
   Thy hand almighty o’er us reigns;
   thou doest what thy will ordains.
   ’Tis well for us thou rulest.

3. O Jesus Christ, our God and Lord,
   Son of the heavenly Father,
   O thou, who hast our peace restored,
   the straying sheep dost gather;
   thou Lamb of God, to thee on high
   out of the depths we sinners cry:
   Have mercy on us, Jesus!
4. O Holy Spirit, precious Gift,
thou Comforter unfail ing,
from Satan's snare our souls up lift,
and let thy power, availing,
avert our woes and calm our dread.

For us the Saviour's blood was shed;
we trust in thee to keep us.
1. I'll thank thee, O my God and Saviour,
and praise thee in my even-song.

The sun may set, but thy great favour
shalt thou through darkest night prolong.

Thy help and grace were ever near us
more than a father didst thou care.

Thou Fount of blessing, thou dost hear us;
thy wondrous mercies I declare.

2. I know in whom my hope is founded
through ever-changing day and night.
Thou hast me with thy love surrounded;
thou art my Rock, I trust thy might.
When once life’s evening veils enshroud me,
I’ll bring, though worn by ills and strife,
for every day thou hast allowed me
thee higher praise, O God of life!
1. Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
and publish abroad his wonderful name;
the name all-victorious of Jesus exalt;
his kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

2. God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
and still he is nigh – his presence we have.
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,
ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.

3. “Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!”
let all cry aloud and honour the Son;
the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

4. Then let us adore, and give him his right,
all glory and power, and wisdom and might,
all honour and blessing, with angels above,
and thanks never ceasing for infinite love.
2. O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessèd peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.
3. All praise and thanks to God
   the Father now be given,
   the Son, and him who reigns
   with them in high-est heav-en,
   the one e-ter-nal God,
   whom earth and heaven a-dore;
   for thus it was, is now,
   and shall be ev-er-more.
THE ECUMENICAL CREEDS
THE ECUMENICAL CREEDS

In Article 9 of the Belgic Confession three writings, dating from the first centuries of the Christian church, are named as creeds which “we willingly receive.” They are the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. These creeds are called ecumenical (general, universal) because they have been approved and accepted by nearly all the churches of Christendom.

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

This creed is called the Apostles’ Creed, not because it was written by the apostles themselves, but because it contains a brief summary of their teachings. It sets forth their doctrine, as has been said, “in sublime simplicity, in unsurpassable brevity, in beautiful order, and with liturgical solemnity.” The Apostles’ Creed is based on the creed used in Rome around A.D. 400, which in turn goes back another two hundred years. It is typical of the creeds used in the western part of the Roman empire.

I. 1. I believe in God the Father almighty,
    Creator of heaven and earth.
II. 2. I believe in Jesus Christ,
    his only-begotten Son, our Lord;
    3. he was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
       born of the virgin Mary;
    4. suffered under Pontius Pilate,
       was crucified, dead, and buried;
       he descended into hell.
    5. On the third day he arose from the dead;
    6. he ascended into heaven,
       and sits at the right hand
       of God the Father almighty;
    7. from there he will come to judge
       the living and the dead.
III. 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit;
    9. I believe a holy catholic Christian church,
       the communion of saints;
    10. the forgiveness of sins;
    11. the resurrection of the body;
THE NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed, also called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, is a statement of the orthodox faith of the early Christian church, in opposition to certain heresies, especially Arianism. These heresies concerned the doctrine of the Trinity and of the person of Christ and were refuted at the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325). Yet it was not this Council but the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381) which adopted the Nicene Creed. This Council incorporated into its creed various formulations from the decisions of Nicea and expanded the confession concerning the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed is typical of the creeds used in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Both the Eastern and the Western church held it in honour, although with one important difference. The Western church included the phrase “and the Son” (known as the Filioque) in the article on the procession of the Holy Spirit, a phrase which to this day is repudiated by the Eastern church.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
    Maker of heaven and earth,
    of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
    begotten of the Father before all ages;
    God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God;
    begotten, not made,
    of one substance with the Father;
    through whom all things were made.
Who, for us men and our salvation,
    came down from heaven
    and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
    and was made man.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried;
    and the third day he arose, according to the Scriptures,
    and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father,
    and he will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead;
    whose kingdom shall have no end.
And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life,
    who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
    who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified;
    who spoke through the prophets.
And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.
THE ATHANASIAN CREED

This creed is named after Athanasius (A.D. 293-373), the champion of orthodoxy over against Arian attacks on the doctrine of the Trinity. Although Athanasius did not write this creed and it is improperly called after him, the name persists because until the seventeenth century it was commonly ascribed to him. It is also called the Quicunque, this being its opening word in the Latin original. Apart from the opening and closing sentences, it consists of two sections, the first setting forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity (3-28), and the second dealing with the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning the two natures (29-41). The teachings of Augustine (A.D. 354-430) in particular form the background to the section on the Trinity, and the decision of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) forms the background to the Christological section. The creed itself appears for the first time in the first half of the sixth century, but the author is unknown. It is of Western origin, and is not recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

(1) Whoever desires to be saved must above all things hold to the catholic faith. (2) Unless a man keeps it in its entirety inviolate, he will assuredly perish eternally. (3) Now this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, (4) without either confusing the persons, or dividing the substance. (5) For the Father’s person is one, the Son’s another, the Holy Spirit’s another; (6) but the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is co-eternal. (7) Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is also the Holy Spirit. (8) The Father is uncreate, the Son uncreate, the Holy Spirit uncreate. (9) The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. (10) The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. (11) Yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; (12) just as there are not three uncreates or three infinites, but one uncreate and one infinite. (13) In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; (14) yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty. (15) Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; (16) and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. (17) Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; (18) and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. (19) Because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately to be both God and Lord, (20) so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords. (21) The Father is from none, not made nor created nor begotten. (22) The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. (23) The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. (24) So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. (25) And in this trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, (26) but all three persons are co-eternal with each other and co-equal. (27) Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both trinity in unity and unity in trinity must be worshipped. (28) So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity. (29) It is necessary, however, to eternal salvation that he should also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. (30) Now the right faith is that we should believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally both God and man. (31) He is God from the Father’s substance, begotten before time; and he is man from his mother’s substance, born in
time. (32) Perfect God, perfect man composed of a human soul and human flesh, (33) equal to the Father in respect of his divinity, less than the Father in respect of his humanity.

(34) Who, although he is God and man, is nevertheless not two, but one Christ. (35) He is one, however, not by the transformation of his divinity into flesh, but by the taking up of his humanity into God; (36) one certainly not by confusion of substance, but by oneness of person. (37) For just as soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ.

(38) Who suffered for our salvation, descended to hell, rose from the dead, (39) ascended to heaven, sat down at the Father’s right hand, from where he will come to judge the living and the dead; (40) at whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies, and will render an account of their deeds; (41) and those who have done good will go to eternal life, those who have done evil to eternal fire.

(42) This is the catholic faith. Unless a man believes it faithfully and steadfastly, he cannot be saved. Amen.
THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY
THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY

THE BELGIC CONFESSION

The first of the doctrinal standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches is the True Christian Confession. It is usually called the Belgic Confession because it originated in the Southern Netherlands, now known as Belgium. Its chief author was Guido de Brès, a preacher of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, who died a martyr to the faith in the year 1567. During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to the most terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government. To protest against this cruel oppression, and to prove to the persecutors that the adherents of the Reformed faith were no rebels, as was laid to their charge, but law-abiding citizens who professed the true Christian doctrine according to the Holy Scriptures, de Brès prepared this confession in the year 1561. In the following year a copy was sent to King Philip II, together with an address in which the petitioners declared that they were ready to obey the government in all lawful things, but that they would “offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to fire,” rather than deny the truth expressed in this confession.

Although the immediate purpose of securing freedom from persecution was not attained, and de Brès himself fell as one of the many thousands who sealed their faith with their lives, his work has endured and will continue to endure for ages. In its composition the author availed himself to some extent of a confession of the Reformed Churches in France, written chiefly by John Calvin and published two years earlier. The work of de Brès, however, is not a mere revision of Calvin’s work, but an independent composition. In the Netherlands it was at once gladly received by the churches, and adopted by the National Synods, held during the last three decades of the sixteenth century. After a careful revision, not of the contents but of the text, the great Synod of Dort in 1618-19 adopted this confession as one of the doctrinal standards of the Reformed churches, to which all office-bearers of the churches were required to subscribe. Its excellence as one of the best symbolical statements of Reformed doctrine has been generally recognized.

TRUE CHRISTIAN CONFESSION

Containing the Summary of the Doctrine of God and of the Eternal Salvation of Man

ARTICLE 1

THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD

We all believe with the heart and confess with the mouth\(^1\) that there is only one God,\(^2\) who is a simple and spiritual being,\(^3\) he is eternal,\(^4\) incomprehensible,\(^5\) invisible,\(^6\) immutable,\(^7\) infinite,\(^8\) almighty,\(^9\) perfectly wise,\(^10\) just,\(^11\) good,\(^12\) and the overflowing fountain of all good.\(^13\)

\(^{1}\) Rom 10:10; \(^{2}\) Deut 6:4; \(^{3}\) Cor 8:4, 6; \(^{4}\) Tim 2:5; \(^{5}\) Jn 4:24; \(^{6}\) Ps 90:2; \(^{7}\) Rom 11:33; \(^{8}\) Col 1:15; \(^{9}\) Tim 6:16; \(^{10}\) Jas 1:17; \(^{11}\) 1 Kings 8:27; Jer 23:24; \(^{12}\) Gen 17:1; Mt 19:26; Rev 1:8; \(^{13}\) Rom 16:27; \(^{14}\) Rom 3:25, 26; Rom 9:14; Rev 16:5, 7; Mt 19:17; \(^{15}\) Jas 1:17.

ARTICLE 2

HOW GOD MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO US

We know him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most beautiful book,\(^1\) wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly
God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. All these things are sufficient to convict men and leave them without excuse. Second, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by his holy and divine Word as far as is necessary for us in this life, to his glory and our salvation.

1 Ps 19:1-4; 2 Ps 19:7, 8; 1 Cor 1:18-21.

ARTICLE 3
THE WORD OF GOD

We confess that this Word of God did not come by the impulse of man, but that men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, as the apostle Peter says (2 Pet 1:21). Thereafter, in his special care for us and our salvation, God commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit his revealed Word to writing and he himself wrote with his own finger the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.

1 Ex 34:27; Ps 102:18; Rev 1:11, 19; 2 Ex 31:18; 3 2 Tim 3:16.

ARTICLE 4
THE CANONICAL BOOKS

We believe that the Holy Scriptures consist of two parts, namely, the Old and the New Testament, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged. These books are listed in the church of God as follows.


The books of the New Testament: the four gospels, namely, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the thirteen letters of the apostle Paul, namely, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon; the letter to the Hebrews; the seven other letters, namely, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, Jude; and the Revelation to the apostle John.

ARTICLE 5
THE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith. We believe without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but especially because the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they contain the evidence of this in themselves; for even the blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are being fulfilled.

1 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 3 1 Cor 12:3; 1 Jn 4:6; 1 Jn 5:7; 4 Deut 18:21, 22; 1 Kings 22:28; Jer 28:9; Ezek 33:33.

ARTICLE 6
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

We distinguish these holy books from the apocryphal, namely, 3 and 4 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, additions to Esther, the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men in the Furnace, Susannah, Bel and the Dragon, the Prayer of Manasseh, and 1 and 2 Maccabees. The church may read and take instruction from these so far as they agree with the canonical books. They are, however, far
from having such power and authority that we may confirm from their testimony any point of faith or of the Christian religion; much less may they be used to detract from the authority of the holy books.

ARTICLE 7
THE SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

We believe that this Holy Scripture fully contains the will of God and that all that man must believe in order to be saved is sufficiently taught therein.\(^1\) The whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in it at length. It is therefore unlawful for any one, even for an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in Holy Scripture;\(^2\) yes, even if it be an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul says (Gal 1:8). Since it is forbidden to add to or take away anything from the Word of God (Deut 12:32),\(^3\) it is evident that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects.\(^4\)

We may not consider any writings of men, however holy these may have been, of equal value with the divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all;\(^5\) for all men are of themselves liars, and only a breath (Ps 62:9). We therefore reject with all our heart whatever does not agree with this infallible rule,\(^6\) as the apostles have taught us: Test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1 Jn 4:1). Likewise: If any one comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him (2 Jn 1:10).

\(^1\) 2 Tim 3:16, 17; 1 Pet 1:10-12; \(^2\) 1 Cor 15:2; 1 Tim 1:3; \(^3\) Deut 4:2; Prov 30:6; Acts 26:22; 1 Cor 4:6; Rev 22:18, 19; \(^4\) Ps 19:7; Jn 15:15; Acts 18:28; Acts 20:27; Rom 15:4; \(^5\) Mk 7:7-9; Acts 4:19; Col 2:8; 1 Jn 2:19; \(^6\) Deut 4:5, 6; Is 8:20; 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 4:4-6; 2 Thess 2:2; 2 Tim 3:14, 15.

ARTICLE 8
GOD IS ONE IN ESSENCE, YET DISTINGUISHED IN THREE PERSONS

According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God,\(^1\) who is one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.\(^2\) The Father is the cause, origin, and beginning of all things visible and invisible.\(^3\) The Son is the Word, the wisdom, and the image of the Father.\(^4\) The Holy Spirit is the eternal power and might who proceeds from the Father and the Son.\(^5\) Nevertheless, God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each has his personal existence, distinguished by their properties; but in such a way that these three persons are but one only God.

It is therefore evident that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless, these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed; for the Father has not assumed our flesh and blood, neither has the Holy Spirit, but the Son only. The Father has never been without his Son,\(^6\) or without his Holy Spirit. For these three, in one and the same essence, are equal in eternity. There is neither first nor last; for they are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy.

\(^1\) 1 Cor 8:4-6; \(^2\) Mt 3:16, 17; Mt 28:19; \(^3\) Eph 3:14, 15; \(^4\) Prov 8:22-31; Jn 1:14; Jn 5:17-26; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3; Rev 19:13; \(^5\) Jn 15:26; \(^6\) Mic 5:2; Jn 1:1, 2.

ARTICLE 9
SCRIPTURE PROOF OF THIS DOCTRINE

All this we know both from the testimonies of Holy Scripture\(^1\) and from the respective works of the three persons, and
especially those we perceive in ourselves. The testimonies of Scripture which lead us to believe this Holy Trinity are written in many places of the Old Testament. It is not necessary to mention them all; it is sufficient to select some with discretion.

In the book of Genesis God says: *Let us make man in our image, in our likeness … So God created man in his own image…; male and female he created them* (Gen 1:26, 27). Also: *The man has now become like one of us* (Gen 3:22). From God’s saying, *Let us make man in our image*, it appears that there are more divine persons than one; and when he says, *God created*, he indicates that there is one God. It is true, he does not say how many persons there are, but what seems to be somewhat obscure in the Old Testament is very plain in the New Testament. For when our Lord was baptized in the river Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard, who said, *This is my Son, whom I love* (Mt 3:17); the Son was seen in the water, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove.² For the baptism of all believers Christ commanded: *Baptize all nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (Mt 28:19). In the gospel according to Luke the angel Gabriel thus addressed Mary, the mother of our Lord: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God* (Luke 1:35). Likewise: *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all* (2 Cor 13:14). In all these places we are fully taught that there are three persons in one only divine essence.

Although this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding, nevertheless in this life we believe it on the ground of the Word of God, and we expect to enjoy its perfect knowledge and fruit hereafter in heaven.

Moreover, we must observe the distinct offices and works of these three persons towards us. The Father is called our Creator by his power; the Son is our Saviour and Redeemer by his blood; the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier by his dwelling in our hearts. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has always been maintained and preserved in the true church since the time of the apostles to this very day, over against Jews, Muslims, and against false Christians and heretics such as Marcion, Mani, Praxeas, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Arius, and such like, who have been justly condemned by the orthodox fathers. In this doctrine, therefore, we willingly receive the three creeds, of the Apostles, of Nicea, and of Athanasius; likewise that which in accordance with them is agreed upon by the early fathers.

1 Jn 14:16; Jn 15:26; Acts 2:32, 33; Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; Tit 3:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Jn 4:13, 14; 1 Jn 5:1-12; Jude 20, 21; Rev 1:4, 5; ² Mt 3:16.

**ARTICLE 10**

**JESUS CHRIST TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD**

We believe that Jesus Christ according to his divine nature is the only-begotten Son of God,¹ begotten from eternity, not made, nor created – for then he would be a creature – but of the same essence with the Father, equally-eternal, *the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being* (Heb 1:3), and is equal to him in all things.² He is the Son of God, not only from the time that he assumed our nature but from all eternity,³ as the following testimonies, when compared with each other, teach us: Moses says that God created the world;⁴ the apostle John says that all things were made by the Word which he calls God.⁵ The letter to the Hebrews says that God made the world through his Son;⁶ likewise the apostle Paul says that God created all things through Jesus Christ.⁷ Therefore it must necessarily follow that he who is called
God, the Word, the Son, and Jesus Christ, did exist at that time when all things were created by him. Therefore he could say, I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born, I am (Jn 8:58), and he prayed, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began (Jn 17:5). And so he is true, eternal God, the Almighty, whom we invoke, worship, and serve.

He also created the angels good, to be his messengers and to serve his elect. Some of these have fallen from the exalted position in which God created them into everlasting perdition, but the others have by the grace of God remained steadfast and continued in their first state. The devils and evil spirits are so depraved that they are enemies of God and of all that is good. With all their might, they lie in wait like murderers to ruin the church and all its members and to destroy everything by their wicked devices. They are therefore by their own wickedness sentenced to eternal damnation and daily expect their horrible torments.

Therefore we detest and reject the error of the Sadducees, who deny that there are any spirits and angels; and also the error of the Manichees, who say that the devils were not created, but have their origin of themselves, and that without having become corrupted, they are wicked by their own nature.

1 Mt 17:5; Jn 1:14, 18; Jn 3:16; Jn 14:1-14; Jn 20:17, 31; Rom 1:4; Gal 4:4; 1 Jn 5:5; 9:12; 2 Jn 5:18, 23; Jn 10:30; Jn 14:9; Jn 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:3; Rev 5:13; 1 Jn 8:58; Jn 17:5; Heb 13:8; Gen 1:1; Jn 1:1-3; Heb 1:2; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16.

ARTICLE 11
THE HOLY SPIRIT TRUE AND ETERNAL GOD

We believe and confess also that the Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is neither made, created, nor begotten, but he can only be said to proceed from both. In order he is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, of one and the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

1 Jn 14:15-26; Jn 15:26; Rom 8:9; 2 Gen 1:2; Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 2:10; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 6:11; Jn 5:7.

ARTICLE 12
THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS, ESPECIALLY THE ANGELS

We believe that the Father through the Word, that is, through his Son, has created out of nothing heaven and earth and all creatures, when it seemed good to him, and that he has given to every creature its being, shape, and form, and to each its specific task and function to serve its Creator. We believe that he also continues to sustain and govern them according to his eternal providence and by his infinite power in order to serve man, to the end that man may serve his God.

1 Mt 17:5; Jn 3:16; Jn 14:1-14; Jn 20:17, 31; Rom 1:4; Gal 4:4; 1 Jn 5:5; 9:12; 2 Jn 5:18, 23; Jn 10:30; Jn 14:9; Jn 20:28; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6; Col 1:15; Tit 2:13; Heb 1:3; Rev 5:13; 1 Jn 8:58; Jn 17:5; Heb 13:8; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16.

ARTICLE 13
THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

We believe that this good God, after he had created all things, did not abandon them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that according to his holy will he so rules and governs them that in this world nothing happens without his direction. Yet God is not the Author of the sins which are committed nor can he be charged with them. For his power and goodness are so great and beyond understanding that he ordains and executes his work in the most excellent and just manner, even when devils and wicked men act unjustly. And as to his actions surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire farther
than our capacity allows us. But with the greatest humility and reverence we adore the just judgments of God, which are hidden from us, and we content ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, who have only to learn those things which he teaches us in his Word, without transgressing these limits.

This doctrine gives us inexpressible consolation, for we learn thereby that nothing can happen to us by chance, but only by the direction of our gracious heavenly Father. He watches over us with fatherly care, keeping all creatures so under his power that not one hair of our head – for they are all numbered – nor one sparrow can fall to the ground without the will of our Father (Mt 10:29, 30). In this we trust, because we know that he holds in check the devil and all our enemies so that they cannot hurt us without his permission and will.

We therefore reject the damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God does not concern himself with anything but leaves all things to chance.

**ARTICLE 14**

**THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN AND HIS INCAPABILITY OF DOING WHAT IS TRULY GOOD**

We believe that God created man of dust from the ground and he made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy. His will could conform to the will of God in every respect. But, when man was in this high position, he did not appreciate it nor did he value his excellency. He gave ear to the words of the devil and willfully subjected himself to sin and consequently to death and the curse. For he transgressed the commandment of life which he had received; by his sin he broke away from God, who was his true life; he corrupted his whole nature. By all this he made himself liable to physical and spiritual death.

Since man became wicked and perverse, corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had once received from God. He has nothing left but some small traces, which are sufficient to make man inexcusable. For whatever light is in us has changed into darkness, as Scripture teaches us, The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it (Jn 1:5); where the apostle John calls mankind darkness. Therefore we reject all teaching contrary to this concerning the free will of man, since man is a slave to sin (Jn 8:34) and a man can receive only what is given him from heaven (Jn 3:27). For who dares to boast that he of himself can do any good, when Christ says: No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him (Jn 6:44)? Who will glory in his own will, when he understands that the sinful mind is hostile to God (Rom 8:7)? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14)? In short, who dares to claim anything, when he realizes that we are not competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God (2 Cor 3:5)? Therefore what the apostle says must justly remain sure and firm: It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil 2:13). For there is no understanding nor will conformable to the understanding and will of God unless Christ has brought it about; as he teaches us: Apart from me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5).
ARTICLE 15
ORIGINAL SIN

We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has spread throughout the whole human race.¹ It is a corruption of the entire nature of man² and a hereditary evil which infects even infants in their mother’s womb.³ As a root it produces in man all sorts of sin. It is, therefore, so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn the human race.⁴ It is not abolished nor eradicated even by baptism, for sin continually streams forth like water welling up from this woeful source.⁵ Yet, in spite of all this, original sin is not imputed to the children of God to their condemnation but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them.⁶ This does not mean that the believers may sleep peacefully in their sin, but that the awareness of this corruption may make them often groan as they eagerly wait to be delivered from this body of death.

In this regard we reject the error of the Pelagians, who say that this sin is only a matter of imitation.

¹ Rom 5:12-14, 19; ² Rom 3:10; ³ Job 14:4; Ps 51:5; Jn 3:6; ⁴ Eph 2:3; ⁵ Rom 7:18, 19; ⁶ Eph 2:4, 5.

ARTICLE 16
DIVINE ELECTION

We believe that, when the entire offspring of Adam plunged into perdition and ruin by the transgression of the first man,¹ God manifested himself to be as he is: merciful and just. Merciful, in rescuing and saving from this perdition those whom in his eternal and unchangeable counsel he has elected² in Jesus Christ our Lord³ by his pure goodness, without any consideration of their works.⁴ Just, in leaving the others in the fall and perdition into which they have plunged themselves.⁵

¹ Rom 3:12; ² 1 Sam 12:22; Ps 65:4; Acts 13:48; Rom 9:16; Rom 11:5; Tit 1:1; ³ Jn 15:16, 19; Rom 8:29; Eph 1:4, 5; ⁴ Mal 1:2, 3; Rom 9:11-13; ² Tim 1:9; Tit 3:4, 5; ⁵ Rom 9:19-22; 1 Pet 2:8.

ARTICLE 17
THE RESCUE OF FALLEN MAN

We believe that, when he saw that man had thus plunged himself into physical and spiritual death and made himself completely miserable, our gracious God in his marvellous wisdom and goodness set out to seek man when he trembling fled from him.¹ He comforted him with the promise that he would give him his Son, born of woman (Gal 4:4), to crush the head of the serpent² and to make man blessed.³

¹ Gen 3:9; ² Gen 3:15; ³ Gen 22:18; Is 7:14; Jn 1:14; Jn 5:46; Jn 7:42; Acts 13:32, 33; Rom 1:2, 3; Gal 3:16; 2 Tim 2:8; Heb 7:14.

ARTICLE 18
THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD

We confess, therefore, that God has fulfilled the promise he made to the fathers by the mouth of his holy prophets¹ when, at the time appointed by him,² he sent into the world his own only-begotten and eternal Son, who took the form of a servant and was born in the likeness of men (Phil 2:7). He truly assumed a real human nature with all its infirmities,³ without sin,⁴ for he was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit and not by the act of a man.⁵ He not only assumed human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul, in order that he might be a real man. For since the soul was lost as well as the body, it was necessary that he should assume both to save both.

Contrary to the heresy of the Anabaptists, who deny that Christ assumed human flesh of his mother, we therefore confess that Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children (Heb 2:14). He is a descendant of David (Acts 2:30); born of David according to his human nature (Rom 1:3); of the womb of the virgin Mary (Luke 1:42); born of woman (Gal
4:4); a branch of David (Jer 33:15); a shoot from the stump of Jesse (Is 11:1); descended from Judah (Heb 7:14); descended from the Jews according to the flesh (Rom 9:5); of the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16), since the Son was concerned with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, yet without sin (Heb 2:16, 17; Heb 4:15).

In this way he is in truth our Immanuel, that is, God with us (Mt 1:23).

ARTICLE 19
THE TWO NATURES IN THE ONE PERSON OF CHRIST

We believe that by this conception the person of the Son of God is inseparably united and joined with the human nature, so that there are not two sons of God, nor two persons, but two natures united in one single person. Each nature retains its own distinct properties: His divine nature has always remained uncreated, without beginning of days or end of life (Heb 7:3), filling heaven and earth. His human nature has not lost its properties; it has beginning of days and remains created. It is finite and retains all the properties of a true body. Even though, by his resurrection, he has given immortality to his human nature, he has not changed its reality, since our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of his body.

However, these two natures are so closely united in one person that they were not even separated by his death. Therefore, what he, when dying, committed into the hands of his Father was a real human spirit that departed from his body. Meanwhile his divinity always remained united with his human nature, even when he was lying in the grave. And the divine nature always remained in him just as it was in him when he was a little child, even though it did not manifest itself as such for a little while.

For this reason we profess him to be true God and true man: true God in order to conquer death by his power; and true man that he might die for us according to the infirmity of his flesh.

ARTICLE 20
THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent his Son to assume that nature, in which disobedience had been committed, to make satisfaction in that same nature, and to bear the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. God therefore manifested his justice against his Son when he laid our iniquity on him, and poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who were guilty and worthy of damnation. Out of a most perfect love he gave his Son to die for us and he raised him for our justification that through him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.

ARTICLE 21
THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST OUR HIGH PRIEST

We believe that Jesus Christ was confirmed by an oath to be a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek. He presented himself in our place before his Father, appeasing God’s wrath by his full satisfaction, offering himself on the tree of the cross, where he poured out his precious blood to purge away our sins, as the prophets had foretold. For it is written, The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. He was led like a lamb to the
slaughter. He was numbered with the transgressors (Is 53:5, 7, 12), and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate, though he had first declared him innocent. He was forced to restore what [he] did not steal (Ps 69:4). He died as the righteous for the unrighteous (1 Pet 3:18). He suffered in body and soul, feeling the horrible punishment caused by our sins, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground (Lk 22:44). Finally, he exclaimed, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me (Mt 27:46)? All this he endured for the forgiveness of our sins.

Therefore we justly say, with Paul, that we know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). We consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus [our] Lord (Phil 3:8). We find comfort in his wounds and have no need to seek or invent any other means of reconciliation with God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which the believers are perfected for all times (Heb 10:14). This is also the reason why the angel of God called him Jesus, that is, Saviour, because he [would] save his people from their sins (Mt 1:21).

ARTICLE 22
OUR JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST

We believe that, in order that we may obtain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith. This faith embraces Jesus Christ with all his merits, makes him our own, and does not seek anything besides him. For it must necessarily follow, either that all we need for our salvation is not in Jesus Christ or, if it is all in him, that one who has Jesus Christ through faith, has complete salvation. It is, therefore, a terrible blasphemy to assert that Christ is not sufficient, but that something else is needed besides him; for the conclusion would then be that Christ is only half a Saviour.

Therefore we rightly say with Paul that we are justified by faith apart from observing the law (Rom 3:28). Meanwhile, strictly speaking, we do not mean that faith as such justifies us, for faith is only the instrument by which we embrace Christ our righteousness; he imputes to us all his merits and as many holy works as he has done for us and in our place. Therefore Jesus Christ is our righteousness, and faith is the instrument that keeps us with him in the communion of all his benefits. When those benefits have become ours, they are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins.

ARTICLE 23
OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS BEFORE GOD

We believe that our blessedness lies in the forgiveness of our sins for Jesus Christ’s sake and that therein our righteousness before God consists, as David and Paul teach us. They speak of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works (Rom 4:6; Ps 32:1). The apostle also says that we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Rom 3:24).

Therefore we always hold to this firm foundation. We give all the glory to God, humble ourselves before him, and acknowledge ourselves to be what we are. We do not claim anything for ourselves or our merits, but rely and rest on the only
obedience of Jesus Christ crucified; his obedience is ours when we believe in him. This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities and to give us confidence in drawing near to God, freeing our conscience of fear, terror, and dread, so that we do not follow the example of our first father, Adam, who trembling tried to hide and covered himself with fig leaves. For indeed, if we had to appear before God, relying – be it ever so little – on ourselves or some other creature, (woe be to us!) we would be consumed. Therefore everyone must say with David, O L ORD, do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you (Ps 143:2).

ARTICLE 24
OUR SANCTIFICATION AND GOOD WORKS

We believe that this true faith, worked in man by the hearing of God’s Word and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a new man. It makes him live a new life and frees him from the slavery of sin. Therefore it is not true that this justifying faith makes man indifferent to living a good and holy life. On the contrary, without it no one would ever do anything out of love for God, but only out of self-love or fear of being condemned. It is therefore impossible for this holy faith to be inactive in man, for we do not speak of an empty faith but of what Scripture calls faith expressing itself through love (Gal 5:6). This faith induces man to apply himself to those works which God has commanded in his Word. These works, proceeding from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, since they are all sanctified by his grace. Nevertheless, they do not count toward our justification. For through faith in Christ we are justified, even before we do any good works. Otherwise they could not be good any more than the fruit of a tree can be good unless the tree itself is good.

Therefore we do good works, but not for merit. For what could we merit? We are indebted to God, rather than he to us, for the good works we do, since it is he who works in [us], to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil 2:13). Let us keep in mind what is written: So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty” (Luke 17:10). Meanwhile we do not deny that God rewards good works, but it is by his grace that he crowns his gifts.

Furthermore, although we do good works, we do not base our salvation on them. We cannot do a single work that is not defiled by our flesh and does not deserve punishment. Even if we could show one good work, the remembrance of one sin is enough to make God reject it. We would then always be in doubt, tossed to and fro without any certainty, and our poor consciences would be constantly tormented, if they did not rely on the merit of the death and passion of our Saviour.

ARTICLE 25
CHRIST, THE FULFILMENT OF THE LAW

We believe that the ceremonies and symbols of the law have ceased with the coming of Christ, and that all shadows have been fulfilled, so that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians. Yet their truth and substance remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled.
In the meantime we still use the testimonies taken from the law and the prophets, both to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel and to order our life in all honesty, according to God’s will and to his glory.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Mt 27:51; Rom 10:4; Heb 9:9, 10; \(^2\) Mt 5:17; Gal 3:24; Col 2:17; \(^3\) Rom 13:8-10; Rom 15:4; 2 Pet 1:19; 2 Pet 3:2.

**ARTICLE 26**

**CHRIST’S INTERCESSION**

We believe that we have no access to God except through the only Mediator\(^1\) and Advocate Jesus Christ the righteous.\(^2\) For this purpose he became man, uniting together the divine and human nature, that we might not be barred from but have access to the divine majesty.\(^3\) This Mediator, however, whom the Father has ordained between himself and us, should not frighten us by his greatness, so that we look for another according to our fancy. There is no creature in heaven or on earth who loves us more than Jesus Christ.\(^4\) Though he was in the form of God, he emptied himself, taking the form of man and of a servant for us (Phil 2:6, 7), and was *made like his brothers in every way* (Heb 2:17). If, therefore, we had to look for another intercessor, could we find one who loves us more than he who laid down his life for us, even while we were his enemies (Rom 5:8, 10)? If we had to look for one who has authority and power, who has more than he who is seated at the right hand of the Father\(^5\) and who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18)? Moreover, who will be heard more readily than God’s own well-beloved Son?\(^6\)

Therefore it was pure lack of trust which introduced the custom of dishonouring the saints rather than honouring them, doing what they themselves never did nor required. On the contrary, they constantly rejected such honour according to their duty,\(^7\) as appears from their writings. Here one ought not to bring in our unworthiness, for it is not a question of offering our prayers on the basis of our own worthiness, but only on the basis of the excellence and worthiness of Jesus Christ,\(^8\) whose righteousness is ours by faith.\(^9\)

Therefore, to take away from us this foolish fear or rather distrust, the author of Hebrews, with good reason, says to us that Jesus Christ was made *like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted* (Heb 2:17, 18). Further, to encourage us more to go to him, he says: *Therefore, since then we have a great High Priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest, who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need* (Heb 4:14-16).\(^10\) The same letter says: *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,...* (Heb 10:19, 22). Also, because Christ lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, *because he always lives to intercede for them* (Heb 7:24, 25).\(^11\) What more is needed? Christ himself says: *I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me* (Jn 14:6). Why should we look for another advocate? It has pleased God to give us his Son as our Advocate. Let us then not leave him for another, or even look for another, without ever finding
one. For when God gave him to us, he knew very well that we were sinners.

In conclusion, according to the command of Christ, we call upon the heavenly Father through Christ our only Mediator, as we are taught in the Lord’s prayer. We rest assured that we shall obtain all we ask of the Father in his name (Jn 16:23).

ARTICLE 27
THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

We believe and profess one catholic or universal church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers, who expect their entire salvation in Jesus Christ, are washed by his blood, and are sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will be to the end, for Christ is an eternal King who cannot be without subjects. This holy church is preserved by God against the fury of the whole world, although for a while it may look very small and as extinct in the eyes of man. Thus during the perilous reign of Ahab, the Lord kept for himself seven thousand persons who had not bowed their knees to Baal.

Moreover, this holy church is not confined or limited to one particular place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world. Yet, it is joined and united with heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.

ARTICLE 28
EVERYONE’S DUTY TO JOIN THE CHURCH

We believe, since this holy assembly and congregation is the assembly of the redeemed and there is no salvation outside of it, that no one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, no matter what his status or standing may be. But all and everyone are obliged to join it and unite with it, maintaining the unity of the church. They must submit themselves to its instruction and discipline, bend their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and serve the edification of the brothers and sisters, according to the talents which God has given them as members of the same body.

To observe this more effectively, it is the duty of all believers, according to the Word of God, to separate from those who do not belong to the church and to join this assembly wherever God has established it. They should do so even though the rulers and edicts of princes were against it, and death or physical punishment might follow.

All therefore who draw away from the church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God.

ARTICLE 29
THE MARKS OF THE TRUE AND THE FALSE CHURCH

We believe that we ought to discern diligently and very carefully from the Word of God what is the true church, for all sects which are in the world today claim for themselves the name of church. We are not speaking here of the hypocrites, who are mixed in the church along with the good and yet are not part of the church, although they are out-

1 Tim 2:5; 2 Jn 2:1; 3 Eph 3:12; 4 Mt 11:28; Jn 15:13; Eph 3:19; 1 Jn 4:10; 6 Heb 1:3; Heb 8:1; 8 Mt 3:17; Jn 1:42; Eph 1:6; 7 Acts 10:26; Acts 14:15; 9 Jer 17:5, 7; Acts 4:12; 1 Cor 1:30; 10 Jn 10:9; Eph 2:18; Heb 9:24; 11 Rom 8:34; 12 Heb 13:15; 13 Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4; 14 Jn 14:13.

1 Gen 22:18; Is 49:6; Eph 2:17-19; 2 Ps 111:1; Jn 10:14, 16; Eph 4:3-6; Heb 12:22, 23; 3 Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; 4 Eph 1:13; Eph 4:30; 5 2 Sam 7:16; Ps 89:36; Ps 110:4; Mt 28:18, 20; Lk 1:32; 6 Ps 46:5; Mt 16:18; 7 Is 1:9; 1 Pet 3:20; Rev 11:7; 8 Jn 19:19; Rom 11:4; 9 Mt 23:8; Jn 4:21-23; Rom 10:12, 13; 10 Ps 119:63; Acts 4:32; Eph 4:4.

wardly in it. 2 We are speaking of the body and the communion of the true church which must be distinguished from all sects that call themselves the church.

The true church is to be recognized by the following marks: It practises the pure preaching of the gospel. 3 It maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them. 4 It exercises church discipline for correcting and punishing sins. 5 In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, 6 rejecting all things contrary to it 7 and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head. 8 Hereby the true church can certainly be known and no one has the right to separate from it.

Those who are of the church may be recognized by the marks of Christians. They believe in Jesus Christ the only Saviour, 9 flee from sin and pursue righteousness, 10 love the true God and their neighbour 11 without turning to the right or left, and crucify their flesh and its works. 12 Although great weakness remains in them, they fight against it by the Spirit all the days of their life. 13 They appeal constantly to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of Jesus Christ, in whom they have forgiveness of their sins through faith in him. 14

The false church assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances than to the Word of God. It does not want to submit itself to the yoke of Christ. 15 It does not administer the sacraments as Christ commanded in His Word, but adds to them and subtracts from them as it pleases. It bases itself more on men than on Jesus Christ. It persecutes those who live holy lives according to the Word of God and who rebuke the false church for its sins, greed, and idolatries. 16

These two churches are easily recognized and distinguished from each other.

1 Rev 2:9; 2 Rom 9:6; 3 Gal 1:8; 1 Tim 3:15; 4 Acts 19:3-5; 1 Cor 11:20-29; 5 Mt 18:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4, 5, 13; 2 Thess 3:6, 14; Tit 3:10; 6 Jn 8:47; Jn 17:20; Acts 17:11; Eph 2:20; Col 1:23; 1 Tim 6:3; 7 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Tim 6:20; Rev 2:6; 8 Jn 10:14; Eph 5:23; Col 1:18; 9 Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 4:2; 10 Rom 6:2; Phil 3:12; 11 Jn 4:19-21; 12 Gal 5:24; 13 Rom 7:15; Gal 5:17; 14 Rom 7:24, 25; 1 Jn 1:7-9; 15 Acts 4:17, 18; 2 Tim 4:3, 4; 2 Jn 9; 16 Jn 16:2.

ARTICLE 30
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

We believe that this true church must be governed according to the spiritual order which our Lord has taught us in his Word. 1 There should be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; 2 there should also be elders 3 and deacons 4 who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church. 5 By these means they preserve the true religion; they see to it that the true doctrine takes its course, that evil men are disciplined in a spiritual way and are restrained, and also that the poor and all the afflicted are helped and comforted according to their need. 6 By these means everything will be done well and in good order when faithful men are chosen 7 in agreement with the rule that the apostle Paul gave to Timothy. 8

1 Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 3:15; Heb 13:20, 21; 2 Lk 1:2; Lk 10:16; Jn 20:23; Rom 10:14; 1 Cor 4:1; 2 Cor 5:19, 20; 2 Tim 4:2; 3 Acts 14:23; Tit 1:5; 4 1 Tim 3:8-10; 5 Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 4:14; 6 Acts 6:1-4; Tit 1:7-9; 7 1 Cor 4:2; 8 1 Tim 3.

ARTICLE 31
THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

We believe that ministers of God’s Word, elders, and deacons ought to be chosen to their offices by lawful election of the church, with prayer and in good order, as stipulated by the Word of God. 1 Therefore everyone shall take care not to intrude by improper means. He shall wait for the time that he is called by God so that he may have sure testimony and thus be certain that his call comes from the Lord. 2 Ministers of the Word, in whatever place they are, have equal power and authority, for they are all servants of Jesus Christ, 3 the only universal Bishop and the
only Head of the church.\(^4\) In order that this holy ordinance of God may not be violated or rejected, we declare that everyone must hold the ministers of the Word and the elders of the church in special esteem because of their work,\(^5\) and as much as possible be at peace with them without grumbling or arguing.

\(^1\) Acts 1:23, 24; Acts 6:2, 3; \(^2\) Acts 13:2; 1 Cor 12:28; 1 Tim 4:14; 1 Tim 5:22; Heb 5:4; \(^3\) 2 Cor 5:20; 1 Pet 5:1-4; \(^4\) Mt 23:8, 10; Eph 1:22; Eph 5:23; \(^5\) 1 Thess 5:12, 13; 1 Tim 5:17; Heb 13:17.

ARTICLE 32
THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH

We believe that, although it is useful and good for those who govern the church to establish a certain order to maintain the body of the church, they must at all times watch that they do not deviate from what Christ, our only Master, has commanded.\(^1\) Therefore we reject all human inventions and laws introduced into the worship of God which bind and compel the consciences in any way.\(^2\) We accept only what is proper to preserve and promote harmony and unity and to keep all in obedience to God.\(^3\) To that end, discipline and excommunication ought to be exercised in agreement with the Word of God.\(^4\)

\(^1\) 1 Tim 3:15; \(^2\) Is 29:13; Mt 15:9; Gal 5:1; \(^3\) 1 Cor 14:33; \(^4\) Mt 16:19; Mt 18:15-18; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5; 1 Tim 1:20.

ARTICLE 33
THE SACRAMENTS

We believe that our gracious God, mindful of our insensitivity and weakness, has ordained sacraments to seal his promises to us and to be pledges of his good will and grace towards us. He did so to nourish and sustain our faith.\(^1\) He has added these to the Word of the gospel\(^2\) to represent better to our external senses both what he declares to us in his Word and what he does inwardly in our hearts. Thus he confirms to us the salvation which he imparts to us. Sacraments are visible signs and seals of something internal and invisible, by means of which God works in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.\(^3\) Therefore the signs are not void and meaningless so that they deceive us. For Jesus Christ is their truth; apart from him they would be nothing. Moreover, we are satisfied with the number of sacraments which Christ our Master has instituted for us, namely, two: the sacrament of baptism\(^4\) and the holy supper of Jesus Christ.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Gen 17:9-14; Ex 12; Rom 4:11; \(^2\) Mt 28:19; Eph 5:26; \(^3\) Rom 2:28, 29; Col 2:11, 12; \(^4\) Mt 28:19; \(^5\) Mt 26:26-28; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

ARTICLE 34
THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, who is the end of the law (Rom 10:4), has by his shed blood put an end to every other shedding of blood that one could or would make as an expiation or satisfaction for sins. He has abolished circumcision, which involved blood, and has instituted in its place the sacrament of baptism.\(^1\) By baptism we are received into the church of God and set apart from all other peoples and false religions, to be entirely committed to him\(^2\) whose mark and emblem we bear. This serves as a testimony to us that he will be our God and gracious Father forever.

For that reason he has commanded all those who are his to be baptized with plain water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). By this he signifies to us that as water washes away the dirt of the body when poured on us, and as water is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled on him, so the blood of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, does the same thing internally to the soul.\(^3\) It washes and cleanses our soul from sin\(^4\) and regenerates us from children of wrath into children of God.\(^5\) This is not brought about by the water as such\(^6\) but by the sprinkling of the pre-
cious blood of the Son of God, which is our Red Sea, through which we must pass to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh, that is, the devil, and enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.

Thus the ministers on their part give us the sacrament and what is visible, but our Lord gives us what is signified by the sacrament, namely, the invisible gifts and grace. He washes, purges, and cleanses our souls of all filth and unrighteousness, renews our hearts and fills them with all comfort, gives us true assurance of his fatherly goodness, clothes us with the new nature, and takes away the old nature with all its works.

We believe, therefore, that anyone who aspires to eternal life ought to be baptized only once. Baptism should never be repeated, for we cannot be born twice. Moreover, baptism benefits us not only when the water is on us and when we receive it, but throughout our whole life. For that reason we reject the error of the Anabaptists, who are not content with a single baptism received only once, and who also condemn the baptism of the little children of believers. We believe that these children ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as infants were circumcised in Israel on the basis of the same promises which are now made to our children. Indeed, Christ shed his blood to wash the children of believers just as much as he shed it for adults. Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament of what Christ has done for them, as the Lord commanded in the law that a lamb was to be offered shortly after children were born. This was a sacrament of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Because baptism has the same significance for our children as circumcision had for the people of Israel, Paul calls baptism the circumcision done by Christ (Col 2:11).

We believe and confess that our Saviour Jesus Christ has instituted the sacrament of the holy supper to nourish and sustain those whom he has already regenerated and incorporated into his family, which is his church.

Those who are born anew have a twofold life. One is physical and temporal, which they received in their first birth and is common to all men. The other is spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth and is effected by the word of the gospel in the communion of the body of Christ. This life is not common to all but only to the elect of God.

For the support of the physical and earthly life God has ordained earthly and material bread. This bread is common to all just as life is common to all. For the support of the spiritual and heavenly life, which believers have, he has sent them a living bread which came down from heaven (Jn 6:51), namely, Jesus Christ, who nourishes and sustains the spiritual life of the believers when he is eaten by them, that is, spiritually appropriated and received by faith.

To represent to us the spiritual and heavenly bread, Christ has instituted earthly and visible bread as a sacrament of his body and wine as a sacrament of his blood. He testifies to us that as certainly as we take and hold the sacrament in our hands and eat and drink it with our mouths, by which our physical life is then sustained, so certainly do we receive by faith, as the hand and mouth of our soul, the true body and true blood of Christ, our only Saviour, in our souls for our spiritual life.

BELGIC CONFESSION

ARTICLE 35

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

It is beyond any doubt that Jesus Christ did not commend his sacraments to us in vain. Therefore he works in us all that he represents to us by these holy signs. We do not understand the manner in which this is done, just as we do not comprehend the hidden activity of the Spirit of God. Yet we do not go wrong when we say that what we eat and drink is the true, natural body and the true blood of Christ. However, the manner in which we eat it is not by mouth but in the spirit by faith. In that way Jesus Christ always remains seated at the right hand of God his Father in heaven; yet he does not cease to communicate himself to us by faith. This banquet is a spiritual table at which Christ makes us partakers of himself with all his benefits and gives us the grace to enjoy both himself and the merit of his suffering and death. He nourishes, strengthens, and comforts our poor, desolate souls by the eating of his flesh, and refreshes and renews them by the drinking of his blood.

Although the sacrament is joined together with that which is signified, the latter is not always received by all. The wicked certainly takes the sacrament to his condemnation, but he does not receive the truth of the sacrament. Thus Judas and Simon the sorcerer both received the sacrament, but they did not receive Christ, who is signified by it. He is communicated exclusively to the believers.

Finally, we receive this holy sacrament in the congregation of the people of God with humility and reverence as we together commemorate the death of Christ our Saviour with thanksgiving and we confess our faith and Christian religion. Therefore no one should come to this table without careful self-examination, lest by eating this bread and drinking from this cup, he eat and drink judgment upon himself (1 Cor 11:28, 29). In short, we are moved by the use of this holy sacrament to a fervent love of God and our neighbours. Therefore we reject as desecrations all additions and condemnable inventions which men have mixed with the sacraments. We declare that we should be content with the ordinance taught by Christ and his apostles and should speak about it as they have spoken.

1 Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-26; 2 Jn 3:5, 6; 1 Jn 5:23; 1 Jn 6:48-51; 3 Jn 6:63; Jn 10:20; b Jn 6:40, 47; 1 Jn 6:55; 1 Cor 10:16; Eph 5:17; f Jn 3:8; g Mk 16:19; Acts 3:21; h Rom 8:32; i 1 Cor 10:3, 4; j 1 Cor 2:14; k Lk 22:21, 22; Acts 8:13, 21; 11 Jn 3:36; l Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; m Acts 2:46; n 1 Cor 11:26.

ARTICLE 36

THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe that, because of the depravity of mankind, our gracious God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and statutes, in order that the lawlessness of men be restrained and that everything be conducted among them in good order. For that purpose he has placed the sword in the hand of the government to punish wrongdoers and to protect those who do what is good (Rom 13:4). Their task of restraining and sustaining is not limited to the public order but includes the protection of the church and its ministry in order that *the kingdom of Christ may come, the Word of the gospel may be preached everywhere, and God may be honoured and served by everyone, as he requires in his Word.

Moreover, everyone – no matter of what quality, condition, or rank – ought to be subject to the civil officers, pay taxes, hold them in honour and respect, and obey them in all things which do not disagree with the Word of God. We ought to pray for them, that God may direct them in all their ways and that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Tim 2:1, 2).

For that reason we condemn the Anabaptists and other rebellious people, and in general all those who reject the authorities and civil officers, subvert justice, introduce a communion of goods,
and overturn the decency that God has established among men.

* The following words were deleted here by the General Synod 1905 of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland): all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of antichrist may be destroyed.

1 Prov 8:15; Dan 2:21; Jn 19:11; Rom 13:1; 2 Ex 18:20; 3 Deut 1:16; Deut 16:19; Judg 21:25; Ps 82; Jer 21:12; Jer 22:3; 1 Pet 2:13, 14; 4 Ps 2; Rom 13:4a; 1 Tim 2:1-4; 5 Mt 17:27; Mt 22:21; Rom 13:7; Tit 3:1; 1 Pet 2:17; 6 Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29; 7 2 Pet 2:10; Jude 8.

ARTICLE 37

THE LAST JUDGMENT

Finally, we believe, according to the Word of God, that when the time, ordained by the Lord but unknown to all creatures, has come and the number of the elect is complete, our Lord Jesus Christ will come from heaven, bodily and visibly, as he ascended (Acts 1:11), with great glory and majesty. He will declare himself judge of the living and the dead and set this old world afire in order to purge it. Then all people, men, women, and children, who ever lived, from the beginning of the world to the end, will appear in person before this great Judge. They will be summoned with the voice of the archangel and with trumpet call of God (1 Thess 4:16).

Those who will have died before that time will arise out of the earth, as their spirits are once again united with their own bodies in which they lived. Those who will then be still alive will not die as the others but will be changed in the twinkling of an eye from perishable to imperishable. Then the books will be opened and the dead will be judged (Rev 20:12) according to what they have done in this world, whether good or evil (2 Cor 5:10). Indeed, all people will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken (Mt 12:36), which the world regards as mere jest and amusement. The secrets and hypocrisy of men will then be publicly uncovered in the sight of all. Thus for good reason the thought of this judgment is horrible and dreadful to the wicked and evildoers but it is a great joy and comfort to the righteous and elect. For then their full redemption will be completed and they will receive the fruits of their labour and of the trouble they have suffered. Their innocence will be known to all and they will see the terrible vengeance God will bring upon the wicked who persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.

The wicked will be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences and will become immortal, but only to be tormented in the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41). On the other hand, the faithful and elect will be crowned with glory and honour. The Son of God will acknowledge their names before God his Father (Mt 10:32) and his elect angels. God will wipe away every tear from their eyes (Rev 21:4), and their cause – at present condemned as heretical and evil by many judges and civil authorities – will be recognized as the cause of the Son of God. As a gracious reward, the Lord will grant them to possess glory such as the heart of man could never conceive. Therefore we look forward to that great day with a great longing to enjoy to the full the promises of God in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen, Come, Lord Jesus (Rev 22:20).

1 Mt 24:36; Mt 25:13; 1 Thess 5:1,2; 2 Heb 11:39, 40; Rev 6:11; 3 Rev 1:7; 4 Mt 24:30; Mt 25:31; 5 Mt 25:31-46; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5; 6 2 Pet 3:10-13; 7 Deut 7:9-11; Rev 20:12, 13; 8 Dan 12:2; Jn 5:28, 29; 9 1 Cor 15:51, 52; Phil 3:20, 21; 10 Heb 9:27; Rev 22:12; 11 Mt 11:22; Mt 23:33; Rom 2:5, 6; Heb 10:27; 2 Pet 2:9; Jude 15; Rev 14:7a; 12 Lk 14:14; 2 Thess 1:3-10; 1 Jn 4:17; 13 Rev 15:4; Rev 18:20; 14 Mt 13:41, 42; Mk 9:48; Lk 16:22-28; Rev 21:8; 15 Rev 20:10; 16 Rev 3:5; 17 Is 25:8; Rev 7:17; 18 Dan 12:3; Mt 5:12; Mt 13:43; 1 Cor 2:9; Rev 21:9-22:5.
THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

The Heidelberg Catechism, the second of our doctrinal standards, was written in Heidelberg at the request of Elector Frederick III, ruler of the most influential German province, the Palatinate, from 1559 to 1576. This pious Christian prince commissioned Zacharius Ursinus, twenty-eight years of age and professor of theology at the Heidelberg University, and Caspar Olevianus, twenty-six years old and Frederick’s court preacher, to prepare a catechism for instructing the youth and for guiding pastors and teachers. Frederick obtained the advice and cooperation of the entire theological faculty in the preparation of the Catechism. The Heidelberg Catechism was adopted by a Synod in Heidelberg and published in German with a preface by Frederick III, dated January 19, 1563. A second and third German edition, each with some small additions, as well as a Latin translation were published in Heidelberg in the same year. The Catechism was soon divided into fifty-two sections, so that a section of the Catechism could be explained to the churches each Sunday of the year.

In the Netherlands this Heidelberg Catechism became generally and favourably known almost as soon as it came from the press, mainly through the efforts of Petrus Dathenus, who translated it into the Dutch language and added this translation to his Dutch rendering of the Genevan Psalter, which was published in 1566. In the same year Peter Gabriel set the example of explaining this catechism to his congregation at Amsterdam in his Sunday afternoon sermons. The National Synods of the sixteenth century adopted it as one of the Three Forms of Unity, requiring office-bearers to subscribe to it and ministers to explain it to the churches. These requirements were strongly emphasized by the great Synod of Dort in 1618-19.

The Heidelberg Catechism has been translated into many languages and is the most influential and the most generally accepted of the several catechisms of Reformation times.

LORD’S DAY 1

1. Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?
   A. That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil.

   He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation.

   Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

1 1 Cor 6:19, 20.
2 Rom 14:7-9.
3 1 Cor 3:23; Tit 2:14.
2. Q. What do you need to know in order to live and die in the joy of this comfort?
   A. First, how great my sins and misery are;\(^1\) second, how I am delivered from all my sins and misery;\(^2\) third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.\(^3\)

1 Rom 3:9, 10; 1 Jn 1:10.
2 Jn 17:3; Acts 4:12; 10:43.
3 Mt 5:16; Rom 6:13; Eph 5:8-10; 1 Pet 2:9, 10.

The First Part

**OUR SIN AND MISERY**

**LORD’S DAY 2**

3. Q. From where do you know your sins and misery?
   A. From the law of God.\(^1\)

1 Rom 3:20; 7:7-25.

4. Q. What does God’s law require of us?
   A. Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22:

   Love the Lord your God
   with all your heart
   and with all your soul
   and with all your mind.\(^1\)

   This is the first and greatest commandment.

   And the second is like it:

   Love your neighbour as yourself.

   All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.\(^2\)

1 Deut 6:5.
2 Lev 19:18.

5. Q. Can you keep all this perfectly?
   A. No,\(^1\) I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.\(^2\)

1 Rom 3:10, 23; 1 Jn 1:8, 10.
2 Gen 6:5; 8:21; Jer 17:9; Rom 7:23; 8:7; Eph 2:3; Tit 3:3.
6. Q. Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?
   A. No, on the contrary, God created man good\textsuperscript{1} and in his image,\textsuperscript{2} that is, in true righteousness and holiness,\textsuperscript{3} so that he might rightly know God his Creator,\textsuperscript{4} heartily love him, and live with him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify him.\textsuperscript{5}

   \begin{itemize}
   \item \textsuperscript{1} Gen 1:31.
   \item \textsuperscript{2} Gen 1:26, 27.
   \item \textsuperscript{3} Eph 4:24.
   \item \textsuperscript{4} Col 3:10.
   \item \textsuperscript{5} Ps 8.
   \end{itemize}

7. Q. From where, then, did man’s depraved nature come?
   A. From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise,\textsuperscript{1} for there our nature became so corrupt\textsuperscript{2} that we are all conceived and born in sin.\textsuperscript{3}

   \begin{itemize}
   \item \textsuperscript{1} Gen 3.
   \item \textsuperscript{2} Rom 5:12, 18, 19.
   \item \textsuperscript{3} Ps 51:5.
   \end{itemize}

8. Q. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil?
   A. Yes,\textsuperscript{1} unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.\textsuperscript{2}

   \begin{itemize}
   \item \textsuperscript{1} Gen 6:5; 8:21; Job 14:4; Is 53:6.
   \item \textsuperscript{2} Jn 3:3-5.
   \end{itemize}

9. Q. But does not God do man an injustice by requiring in his law what man cannot do?
   A. No, for God so created man that he was able to do it.\textsuperscript{1} But man, at the instigation of the devil,\textsuperscript{2} in deliberate disobedience\textsuperscript{3} robbed himself and all his descendants of these gifts.\textsuperscript{4}

   \begin{itemize}
   \item \textsuperscript{1} Gen 1:31.
   \item \textsuperscript{2} Gen 3:13; Jn 8:44; 1 Tim 2:13, 14.
   \item \textsuperscript{3} Gen 3:6.
   \item \textsuperscript{4} Rom 5:12, 18, 19.
   \end{itemize}

10. Q. Will God allow such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?
A. Certainly not.
He is terribly displeased
with our original sin
as well as our actual sins.
Therefore he will punish them
by a just judgment
both now and eternally,\(^1\)
as he has declared:\(^2\)

_Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law_ (Gal 3:10).

\(^{1}\) Gen 2:17; Ex 34:7; Ps 5:4-6; 7:11; Nahum 1:2; Rom 1:18; 5:12; Eph 5:6; Heb 9:27.
\(^{2}\) Deut 27:26.

11. Q. But is God not also merciful?
A. God is indeed merciful,\(^1\)
but he is also just.\(^2\)
His justice requires
that sin committed
against the most high majesty of God
also be punished with the most severe,
that is, with everlasting,
punishment of body and soul.\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Ex 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps 103:8, 9.
\(^{2}\) Ex 20:5; 34:7; Deut 7:9-11; Ps 5:4-6; Heb 10:30, 31.
\(^{3}\) Mt 25:45, 46.

The Second Part

OUR DELIVERANCE

LORD’S DAY 5

12. Q. Since, according to God’s righteous judgment we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, how can we escape this punishment and be again received into favour?
A. God demands that his justice be satisfied.\(^1\)
Therefore we must make full payment,
either by ourselves or through another.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Ex 20:5; 23:7; Rom 2:1-11.
\(^{2}\) Is 53:11; Rom 8:3, 4.

13. Q. Can we by ourselves make this payment?
A. Certainly not.
On the contrary, we daily increase our debt.\(^1\)

\(^{1}\) Ps 130:3; Mt 6:12; Rom 2:4, 5.

14. Q. Can any mere creature pay for us?
A. No.
In the first place,
God will not punish another creature for the sin which man has committed. ¹
Furthermore,
no mere creature can sustain the burden of God’s eternal wrath against sin and deliver others from it. ²

² Ps 130:3; Nahum 1:6.

15. Q. What kind of mediator and deliverer must we seek?
A. One who is a true¹ and righteous² man, and yet more powerful than all creatures; that is, one who is at the same time true God.³

¹ 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:17.
² Is 53:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:26.
³ Is 7:14; 9:6; Jer 23:6; Jn 1:1; Rom 8:3, 4.

LORD’S DAY 6

16. Q. Why must he be a true and righteous man?
A. He must be a true man because the justice of God requires that the same human nature which has sinned should pay for sin.¹
He must be a righteous man because one who himself is a sinner cannot pay for others.²

¹ Rom 5:12, 15; 1 Cor 15:21; Heb 2:14-16.
² Heb 7:26, 27; 1 Pet 3:18.

17. Q. Why must he at the same time be true God?
A. He must be true God so that by the power of his divine nature¹ he might bear in his human nature the burden of God’s wrath,² and might obtain for us and restore to us righteousness and life.³

¹ Is 9:6.
² Deut 4:24; Nahum 1:6; Ps 130:3.
³ Is 53:5, 11; Jn 3:16; 2 Cor 5:21.

18. Q. But who is that Mediator who at the same time is true God and a true and righteous man?
A. Our Lord Jesus Christ,¹ who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1 Cor 1:30).

¹ Mt 1:21-23; Lk 2:11; 1 Tim 2:5; 3:16.
19. Q. From where do you know this?
A. From the holy gospel, which God himself first revealed in Paradise.\(^1\)
   Later, he had it proclaimed by the patriarchs\(^2\) and prophets,\(^3\)
   and foreshadowed by the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law.\(^4\)
   Finally, he had it fulfilled through his only Son.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Gen 3:15.
\(^3\) Is 53; Jer 23:5, 6; Mic 7:18-20; Acts 10:43; Heb 1:1.
\(^4\) Lev 1-7; Jn 5:46; Heb 10:1-10.
\(^5\) Rom 10:4; Gal 4:4, 5; Col 2:17.

20. Q. Are all men, then, saved by Christ just as they perished through Adam?
A. No.
   Only those are saved who by a true faith are grafted into Christ and accept all his benefits.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Mt 7:14; Jn 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; Rom 11:16-21.

21. Q. What is true faith?
A. True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in his Word.\(^1\)
   At the same time it is a firm confidence that not only to others, but also to me,\(^2\)
   God has granted forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness, and salvation,\(^3\)
   out of mere grace, only for the sake of Christ’s merits.\(^4\)
   This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Jn 17:3, 17; Heb 11:1-3; Jas 2:19.
\(^2\) Rom 4:18-21; 5:1; 10:10; Heb 4:16.
\(^3\) Gal 2:20.
\(^4\) Rom 1:17; Heb 10:10.
\(^5\) Rom 3:20-26; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-10.
\(^6\) Acts 16:14; Rom 1:16; 10:17; 1 Cor 1:21.

22. Q. What, then, must a Christian believe?
A. All that is promised us in the gospel,\(^1\)
   which the articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary.

\(^1\) Mt 28:19; Jn 20:30, 31.
23. **Q.** What are these articles?

   **A.**

   I. 1. *I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.*

   II. 2. *I believe in Jesus Christ, his only-begotten Son, our Lord;*

      3. *he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;*

      4. *suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell.*

      5. *On the third day he arose from the dead;*

      6. *he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty;*

      7. *from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.*

   III. 8. *I believe in the Holy Spirit;*

      9. *I believe a holy catholic Christian church, the communion of saints;*

      10. *the forgiveness of sins;*

      11. *the resurrection of the body;*

      12. *and the life everlasting.*

   LORD’S DAY 8

24. **Q.** How are these articles divided?

   **A.** Into three parts:

   the first is about God the Father and our creation;

   the second about God the Son and our redemption;

   the third about God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification.

25. **Q.** Since there is only one God, why do you speak of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

   **A.** Because God has so revealed himself in his Word that these three distinct persons are the one, true, eternal God.

1 Deut 6:4; Is 44:6; 45:5; 1 Cor 8:4, 6.

2 Gen 1:2, 3; Is 61:1; 63:8-10; Mt 3:16, 17; 28:18, 19; Lk 4:18; Jn 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6; Tit 3:5, 6.

**God the Father and our Creation**

LORD’S DAY 9

26. **Q.** What do you believe when you say:

   *I believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?*

   **A.** That the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them,
and who still upholds and governs them
by his eternal counsel and providence,²
is, for the sake of Christ his Son,
my God and my Father.³
In him I trust so completely
as to have no doubt
that he will provide me
with all things necessary for body and soul,⁴
and will also turn to my good
whatever adversity he sends me
in this life of sorrow.⁵
He is able to do so as almighty God,⁶
and willing also as a faithful Father.⁷

1 G en 1 and 2; Ex 20:11; Job 38 and 39; Ps 33:6; Is 44:24; Acts 4:24; 14:15.
2 Ps 104:27-30; Mt 6:30; 10:29; Eph 1:11.
3 Jn 1:12, 13; Rom 8:15, 16; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 1:5.
4 Ps 55:22; Mt 6:25, 26; Lk 12:22-31.
5 Rom 8:28.
7 Mt 6:32, 33; 7:9-11.

27. Q. What do you understand by the providence of God?

A. God’s providence is
his almighty and ever present power,¹
whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds
heaven and earth and all creatures,²
and so governs them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and barren years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
riches and poverty,³
indeed, all things,
come to us not by chance⁴
but by his fatherly hand.⁵

2 Heb 1:3.
3 Jer 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; Jn 9:3; Prov 22:2.
4 Prov 16:33.
5 Mt 10:29.

28. Q. What does it benefit us to know
that God has created all things
and still upholds them by his providence?

A. We can be patient in adversity,¹
thankful in prosperity,²
and with a view to the future
we can have a firm confidence
in our faithful God and Father
that no creature shall separate us
from his love;³
for all creatures are so completely in his hand
that without his will
they cannot so much as move. 4

1 Job 1:21, 22; Ps 39:10; Jas 1:3.
2 Deut 8:10; 1 Thess 5:18.
3 Ps 55:22; Rom 5:3-5; 8:38, 39.

God the Son and our Redemption

LORD’S DAY 11

29. Q. Why is the Son of God called Jesus,
that is, Saviour?
A. Because he saves us from all our sins, 1
and because salvation is not to be sought or found
in anyone else. 2

1 Mt 1:21; Heb 7:25.
2 Is 43:11; Jn 15:4, 5; Acts 4:11, 12; 1 Tim 2:5.

30. Q. Do those who seek
their salvation or well-being
in saints, in themselves, or anywhere else,
also believe in the only Saviour Jesus?
A. No.
Though they boast of him in words,
they in fact deny the only Saviour Jesus. 1
For one of two things must be true:
either Jesus is not a complete Saviour,
or those who by true faith accept this Saviour
must find in him all that is necessary
for their salvation. 2

1 1 Cor 1:12, 13; Gal 5:4.
2 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.

LORD’S DAY 12

31. Q. Why is he called Christ,
that is, Anointed?
A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father,
and anointed with the Holy Spirit, 1 to be
our chief Prophet and Teacher, 2
who has fully revealed to us
the secret counsel and will of God
concerning our redemption; 3
our only High Priest, 4
who by the one sacrifice of his body
has redeemed us, 5
and who continually intercedes for us
before the Father; 6
and our eternal King, 7

1 1 Cor 1:12, 13; Gal 5:4.
2 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.
3 1 Cor 1:12, 13; Gal 5:4.
4 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.
5 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.
6 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.
7 Col 1:19, 20; 2:10; 1 Jn 1:7.
who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who defends and preserves us in the redemption obtained for us. 8

1 Ps 45:7 (Heb 1:9); Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18); Lk 3:21, 22.
3 Jn 1:18; 15:15.
4 Ps 110:4 (Heb 7:17).
6 Rom 8:34; Heb 9:24; 1 Jn 2:1.
7 Zech 9:9 (Mt 21:5); Lk 1:33.
8 Mt 28:18-20; Jn 10:28; Rev 12:10, 11.

32. Q. Why are you called a Christian?
   A. Because I am a member of Christ by faith 1 and thus share in his anointing, 2 so that I may
      as prophet confess his name, 3
      as priest present myself
      a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him, 4
      and as king fight with a free and good conscience
      against sin and the devil in this life, 5
      and hereafter reign with him eternally
      over all creatures. 6

1 1 Cor 12:12-27.
2 Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17); 1 Jn 2:27.
3 Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9, 10; Heb 13:15.
4 Rom 12:1; 1 Pet 2:5, 9.
5 Gal 5:16, 17; Eph 6:11; 1 Tim 1:18, 19.
6 Mt 25:34; 2 Tim 2:12.

LORD’S DAY 13

33. Q. Why is he called God’s only-begotten Son, since we also are children of God?
   A. Because Christ alone
      is the eternal, natural Son of God. 1
      We, however, are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ’s sake. 2

1 Jn 1:1-3, 14, 18; 3:16; Rom 8:32; Heb 1; 1 Jn 4:9.
2 Jn 1:12; Rom 8:14-17; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:5, 6.

34. Q. Why do you call him our Lord?
   A. Because he has ransomed us, body and soul, 1 from all our sins, not with silver or gold but with his precious blood, 2 and has freed us from all the power of the devil to make us his own possession. 3

1 1 Cor 6:20; 1 Tim 2:5, 6.
2 1 Pet 1:18, 19.
3 Col 1:13, 14; Heb 2:14, 15.
35. Q. What do you confess when you say:

He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary?

A. The eternal Son of God,

who is and remains true and eternal God,\(^1\)

took upon himself true human nature

from the flesh and blood of the virgin Mary,\(^2\)

through the working of the Holy Spirit.\(^3\)

Thus he is also the true seed of David,\(^4\)

and like his brothers in every respect,\(^5\)

yet without sin.\(^6\)

\(^1\) Jn 1:1; 10:30-36; Rom 1:3; 9:5; Col 1:15-17; 1 Jn 5:20.
\(^2\) Mt 1:18-23; Jn 1:14; Gal 4:4; Heb 2:14.
\(^3\) Lk 1:35.
\(^4\) 2 Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11; Mt 1:1; Lk 1:32; Rom 1:3.
\(^5\) Phil 2:7; Heb 2:17.
\(^6\) Heb 4:15; 7:26, 27.

36. Q. What benefit do you receive

from the holy conception and birth of Christ?

A. He is our Mediator,\(^1\)

and with his innocence and perfect holiness

covers, in the sight of God,

my sin, in which I was conceived and born.\(^2\)

\(^1\) 1 Tim 2:5, 6; Heb 9:13-15.
\(^2\) Rom 8:3, 4; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 4:4, 5; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.

37. Q. What do you confess when you say

that he suffered?

A. During all the time he lived on earth,

but especially at the end,

Christ bore in body and soul

the wrath of God against the sin

of the whole human race.\(^1\)

Thus, by his suffering,

as the only atoning sacrifice,\(^2\)

he has redeemed our body and soul

from everlasting damnation,\(^3\)

and obtained for us

the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Is 53; 1 Tim 2:6; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18.
\(^2\) Rom 3:25; 1 Cor 5:7; Eph 5:2; Heb 10:14; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10.
\(^3\) Rom 8:1-4; Gal 3:13; Col 1:13; Heb 9:12; 1 Pet 1:18, 19.
\(^4\) Jn 3:16; Rom 3:24-26; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:15.

38. Q. Why did he suffer under Pontius Pilate as judge?

A. Though innocent, Christ was condemned

by an earthly judge,\(^1\)

and so he freed us
from the severe judgment of God that was to fall on us.\textsuperscript{2}
\textsuperscript{1}Lk 23:13-24; Jn 19:4, 12-16.
\textsuperscript{2}Is 53:4, 5; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13.

39. Q. Does it have a special meaning that Christ was crucified and did not die in a different way?
A. Yes.
Thereby I am assured that he took upon himself the curse which lay on me, for a crucified one was cursed by God.\textsuperscript{1}
\textsuperscript{1}Deut 21:23; Gal 3:13.

\textit{LORD’S DAY 16}

40. Q. Why was it necessary for Christ to humble himself even unto death?
A. Because of the justice and truth of God\textsuperscript{1} satisfaction for our sins could be made in no other way than by the death of the Son of God.\textsuperscript{2}
\textsuperscript{1}Gen 2:17.
\textsuperscript{2}Rom 8:3; Phil 2:8; Heb 2:9, 14, 15.

41. Q. Why was he buried?
A. His burial testified that he had really died.\textsuperscript{1}
\textsuperscript{1}Is 53:9; Jn 19:38-42; Acts 13:29; 1 Cor 15:3, 4.

42. Q. Since Christ has died for us, why do we still have to die?
A. Our death is not a payment for our sins, but it puts an end to sin and is an entrance into eternal life.\textsuperscript{1}
\textsuperscript{1}Jn 5:24; Phil 1:21-23; 1 Thess 5:9, 10.

43. Q. What further benefit do we receive from Christ’s sacrifice and death on the cross?
A. Through Christ’s death our old nature is crucified, put to death, and buried with him,\textsuperscript{1} so that the evil desires of the flesh may no longer reign in us,\textsuperscript{2} but that we may offer ourselves to him as a sacrifice of thankfulness.\textsuperscript{3}
\textsuperscript{1}Rom 6:5-11; Col 2:11, 12.
\textsuperscript{2}Rom 6:12-14.
\textsuperscript{3}Rom 12:1; Eph 5:1, 2.
44. Q. Why is there added:  
*He descended into hell?*

A. In my greatest sorrows and temptations  
I may be assured and comforted  
that my Lord Jesus Christ,  
by his unspeakable anguish, pain, terror, and agony,  
which he endured throughout all his sufferings\(^1\)  
but especially on the cross,  
has delivered me  
from the anguish and torment of hell.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Ps 18:5, 6; 116:3; Mt 26:36-46; 27:45, 46; Heb 5:7-10.  
\(^2\) Is 53.

**LORD’S DAY 17**

45. Q. How does Christ’s resurrection benefit us?  

A. First,  
by his resurrection  
he has overcome death,  
so that he could make us share  
in the righteousness  
which he had obtained for us  
by his death.\(^1\)

Second,  
by his power  
we too are raised up  
to a new life.\(^2\)

Third,  
Christ’s resurrection  
is to us a sure pledge  
of our glorious resurrection.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:16-20; 1 Pet 1:3-5.  
\(^2\) Rom 6:5-11; Eph 2:4-6; Col 3:1-4.  
\(^3\) Rom 8:11; 1 Cor 15:12-23; Phil 3:20, 21.

**LORD’S DAY 18**

46. Q. What do you confess when you say,  
*he ascended into heaven?*  

A. That Christ,  
before the eyes of his disciples,  
was taken up from the earth into heaven,\(^1\)  
and that he is there for our benefit\(^2\)  
until he comes again  
to judge the living and the dead.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11.  
\(^3\) Mt 24:30; Acts 1:11.

47. Q. Is Christ, then, not with us  
until the end of the world,  
as he has promised us?\(^1\)
A. Christ is true man and true God. With respect to his human nature he is no longer on earth, 2 but with respect to his divinity, majesty, grace, and Spirit he is never absent from us. 3

1 Mt 28:20.

48. Q. But are the two natures in Christ not separated from each other if his human nature is not present wherever his divinity is?
A. Not at all, for his divinity has no limits and is present everywhere. 1 So it must follow that his divinity is indeed beyond the human nature which he has taken on and nevertheless is within this human nature and remains personally united with it. 2

1 Jer 23:23, 24; Acts 7:48, 49.
2 Jn 1:14; 3:13; Col 2:9.

49. Q. How does Christ’s ascension into heaven benefit us?
A. First, he is our Advocate in heaven before his Father. 1 Second, we have our flesh in heaven as a sure pledge that he, our Head, will also take us, his members, up to himself. 2 Third, he sends us his Spirit as a counter-pledge, 3 by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, and not the things that are on earth. 4

1 Rom 8:34; 1 Jn 2:1.
2 Jn 14:2; 17:24; Eph 2:4-6.
3 Jn 14:16; Acts 2:33; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; 5:5.
4 Col 3:1-4.

LORD’S DAY 19

50. Q. Why is it added, and sits at the right hand of God?
A. Christ ascended into heaven to manifest himself there.
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as Head of his church,\(^1\)
through whom the Father governs all things.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Eph 1:20-23; Col 1:18.
\(^2\) Mt 28:18; Jn 5:22, 23.

51. Q. How does the glory of Christ, our Head, benefit us?
A. First,
   
   by his Holy Spirit
   
   he pours out heavenly gifts
   
   upon us, his members.\(^1\)

   Second,

   by his power
   
   he defends and preserves us
   
   against all enemies.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Acts 2:33; Eph 4:7-12.
\(^2\) Ps 2:9; 110:1, 2; Jn 10:27-30; Rev 19:11-16.

52. Q. What comfort is it to you
that Christ will come to judge
the living and the dead?
A. In all my sorrow and persecution
   
   I lift up my head
   
   and eagerly await
   
   as judge from heaven
   
   the very same person
   
   who before has submitted himself
   
   to the judgment of God
   
   for my sake,
   
   and has removed all the curse from me.\(^1\)

   He will cast all his and my enemies
   
   into everlasting condemnation,
   
   but he will take me and all his chosen ones
   
   to himself
   
   into heavenly joy and glory.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Lk 21:28; Rom 8:22-25; Phil 3:20,21; Tit 2:13, 14.
\(^2\) Mt 25:31-46; 1 Thess 4:16, 17; 2 Thess 1:6-10.

God the Holy Spirit and our Sanctification

LORD’S DAY 20

53. Q. What do you believe
concerning the Holy Spirit?
A. First,
   
   he is, together with the Father and the Son,
   
   true and eternal God.\(^1\)

   Second,

   he is also given to me,\(^2\)
   
   to make me by true faith
   
   share in Christ and all his benefits,\(^3\)
to comfort me,\(^4\)
and to remain with me forever.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Gen 1:1, 2; Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor 3:16.
\(^2\) 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:21, 22; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13.
\(^3\) Gal 3:14; 1 Pet 1:2.

\section*{LORD'S DAY 21}

\subsection*{54. Q. What do you believe concerning the \textit{holy catholic Christian church}?}

\begin{itemize}[leftmargin=*]
  \item A. I believe that the Son of God,\(^1\)
  \begin{itemize}
    \item out of the whole human race,\(^2\)
    \item from the beginning of the world to its end,\(^3\)
    \item gathers, defends, and preserves for himself,\(^4\)
    \item by his Spirit and Word,\(^5\)
    \item in the unity of the true faith,\(^6\)
    \item a church chosen to everlasting life.\(^7\)
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

And I believe that I am\(^8\)
and forever shall remain
a living member of it.\(^9\)

\(^1\) Jn 10:11; Acts 20:28; Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:18.
\(^2\) Gen 26:4; Rev 4:5-9.
\(^3\) Is 59:21; 1 Cor 11:16.
\(^4\) Ps 129:1-5; Mt 16:18; Jn 10:28-30.
\(^5\) Rom 1:16; 10:14-17; Eph 5:26.
\(^7\) Rom 8:29; Eph 1:3-14.
\(^8\) 1 Jn 3:14, 19-21.
\(^9\) Ps 23:6; Jn 10:27, 28; 1 Cor 1:4-9; 1 Pet 1:3-5.

\subsection*{55. Q. What do you understand by the \textit{communion of saints}?}

\begin{itemize}[leftmargin=*]
  \item A. First,
  \begin{itemize}
    \item that believers, all and everyone,
    \item as members of Christ
    \item have communion with him
    \item and share in all his treasures and gifts.\(^1\)
  \end{itemize}
  \item Second,
  \begin{itemize}
    \item that everyone is duty-bound
    \item to use his gifts
    \item readily and cheerfully
    \item for the benefit and well-being
    \item of the other members.\(^2\)
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\(^1\) Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 6:17; 12:4-7, 12, 13; 1 Jn 1:3.
\(^2\) Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil 2:4-8.

\subsection*{56. Q. What do you believe concerning the \textit{forgiveness of sins}?}

\begin{itemize}[leftmargin=*]
  \item A. I believe that God,
  \begin{itemize}
    \item because of Christ's satisfaction,
    \item will no more remember
    \item my sins.\(^1\)
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\(^1\) 1 Jn 3:19.
nor my sinful nature,
against which I have to struggle
all my life, \(^2\)
but will graciously grant me
the righteousness of Christ,
that I may never come into condemnation. \(^3\)

1 Ps 103:3, 4, 10, 12; Mic 7:18, 19; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 1 Jn 1:7; 2:2.
2 Rom 7:21-25.
3 Jn 3:17, 18; 5:24; Rom 8:1, 2.

**LORD’S DAY 22**

57. Q. What comfort does
*the resurrection of the body*
offer you?

A. Not only shall my soul
after this life
immediately be taken up
to Christ, my Head, \(^1\)
but also this my flesh,
raised by the power of Christ,
shall be reunited with my soul
and made like Christ’s glorious body. \(^2\)

1 Lk 16:22; 23:43; Phil 1:21-23.
2 Job 19:25, 26; 1 Cor 15:20, 42-46, 54; Phil 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2.

58. Q. What comfort do you receive
from the article about
*the life everlasting*?

A. Since I now already
feel in my heart
the beginning of eternal joy, \(^1\)
I shall after this life
possess perfect blessedness,
such as no eye has seen,
nor ear heard,
nor the heart of man conceived –
a blessedness in which to praise God forever. \(^2\)

1 Jn 17:3; Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 5:2, 3.
2 Jn 17:24; 1 Cor 2:9.

**Our Justification**

**LORD’S DAY 23**

59. Q. But what does it help you
now that you believe all this?

A. In Christ I am righteous before God
and heir to life everlasting. \(^1\)

1 Hab 2:4; Jn 3:36; Rom 1:17; 5:1, 2.

60. Q. How are you righteous before God?
A. Only by true faith in Jesus Christ.  
Although my conscience accuses me 
that I have grievously sinned 
against all God’s commandments, 
have never kept any of them, 
and am still inclined to all evil, 
yet God, without any merit of my own, 
out of mere grace, 
imputes to me 
the perfect satisfaction, 
righteousness, and holiness of Christ. 

He grants these to me 
as if I had never had nor committed 
any sin, 
and as if I myself had accomplished 
all the obedience 
which Christ has rendered for me, 
if only I accept this gift 
with a believing heart.

1 Rom 3:21-28; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8, 9; Phil 3:8-11. 
2 Rom 3:9, 10. 
3 Rom 7:23. 
4 Deut 9:6; Ezek 36:22; Tit 3:4, 5. 
5 Rom 3:24; Eph 2:8. 
6 Rom 4:3-5; 2 Cor 5:17-19; 1 Jn 2:1, 2. 
7 Rom 4:24, 25; 2 Cor 5:21. 
8 Jn 3:18; Acts 16:30, 31; Rom 3:22.

61. Q. Why do you say 
that you are righteous 
only by faith? 

A. Not that I am acceptable to God 
on account of the worthiness 
of my faith, 
for only the satisfaction, righteousness, 
and holiness of Christ 
is my righteousness before God. 
I can receive this righteousness 
and make it my own 
by faith only.

1 1 Cor 1:30, 31; 2:2. 
2 Rom 10:10; 1 Jn 5:10-12.

LORD’S DAY 24

62. Q. But why can our good works not be 
our righteousness before God, 
or at least a part of it? 

A. Because the righteousness 
which can stand before God’s judgment 
must be absolutely perfect 
and in complete agreement 
with the law of God,
whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin.²

1 Deut 27:26; Gal 3:10.
2 Is 64:6.

63. Q. But do our good works earn nothing, even though God promises to reward them in this life and the next?¹
A. This reward is not earned; it is a gift of grace.²

1 Mt 5:12; Heb 11:6.
2 Lk 17:10; 2 Tim 4:7, 8.

64. Q. Does this teaching not make people careless and wicked?
A. No. It is impossible that those grafted into Christ by true faith should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness.¹

1 Mt 7:18; Lk 6:43-45; Jn 15:5.

Word and Sacraments

LORD’S DAY 25

65. Q. Since then faith alone makes us share in Christ and all his benefits, where does this faith come from?
A. From the Holy Spirit,¹ who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel,² and strengthens it by the use of the sacraments.³

1 Jn 3:5; 1 Cor 2:10-14; Eph 2:8; Phil 1:29.
3 Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 10:16.

66. Q. What are the sacraments?
A. The sacraments are holy, visible signs and seals. They were instituted by God so that by their use he might the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel.¹
And this is the promise: that God graciously grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life because of the one sacrifice of Christ accomplished on the cross.²

1 Gen 17:11; Deut 30:6; Rom 4:11.
2 Mt 26:27, 28; Acts 2:38; Heb 10:10.
67. Q. Are both the Word and the sacraments then intended to focus our faith on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only ground of our salvation?

A. Yes, indeed. The Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that our entire salvation rests on Christ’s one sacrifice for us on the cross.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 11:26; Gal 3:27.

68. Q. How many sacraments has Christ instituted in the new covenant?

A. Two: holy baptism and the holy supper.\(^1\)

\(^1\)Mt 28:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-26.

### Holy Baptism

#### LORD’S DAY 26

69. Q. How does holy baptism signify and seal to you that the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross benefits you?

A. In this way:

Christ instituted this outward washing\(^1\)
and with it gave the promise that, as surely as water washes away the dirt from the body, so certainly his blood and Spirit wash away the impurity of my soul, that is, all my sins.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Mt 28:19.

\(^2\)Mt 3:11; Mk 16:16; Jn 1:33; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

70. Q. What does it mean to be washed with Christ’s blood and Spirit?

A. To be washed with Christ’s blood means to receive forgiveness of sins from God, through grace, because of Christ’s blood, poured out for us in his sacrifice on the cross.\(^1\)

To be washed with his Spirit means to be renewed by the Holy Spirit and sanctified to be members of Christ, so that more and more we become dead to sin and lead a holy and blameless life.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Ezek 36:25; Zech 13:1; Eph 1:7; Heb 12:24; 1 Pet 1:2; Rev 1:5; 7:14.

\(^2\)Jn 3:5-8; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 6:11; Col 2:11, 12.
71. Q. Where has Christ promised that he will wash us with his blood and Spirit as surely as we are washed with the water of baptism?

A. In the institution of baptism, where he says:

*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Mt 28:19).

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,*

*but whoever does not believe will be condemned* (Mk 16:16).

This promise is repeated where Scripture calls baptism the washing of rebirth and the washing away of sins (Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16).

**LORD’S DAY 27**

72. Q. Does this outward washing with water itself wash away sins?

A. No, only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit cleanse us from all sins.¹

¹ Mt 3:11; 1 Pet 3:21; 1 Jn 1:7.

73. Q. Why then does the Holy Spirit call baptism the washing of regeneration and the washing away of sins?

A. God speaks in this way for a good reason. He wants to teach us that the blood and Spirit of Christ remove our sins just as water takes away dirt from the body.¹

But, even more important, he wants to assure us by this divine pledge and sign that we are as truly cleansed from our sins spiritually as we are bodily washed with water.²

¹ 1 Cor 6:11; Rev 1:5; 7:14.
² Mk 16:16; Acts 2:38; Rom 6:3, 4; Gal 3:27.

74. Q. Should infants, too, be baptized?

A. Yes. Infants as well as adults belong to God’s covenant and congregation.¹ Through Christ’s blood the redemption from sin and the Holy Spirit, who works faith,
are promised to them
no less than to adults.\(^2\)

Therefore, by baptism, as sign of the covenant,
they must be incorporated into the Christian church
and distinguished from the children of unbelievers.\(^3\)

This was done in the old covenant by circumcision,\(^4\)
in place of which baptism was instituted
in the new covenant.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Gen 17:7; Mt 19:14.
\(^3\) Acts 10:47; 1 Cor 7:14.
\(^4\) Gen 17:9-14.
\(^5\) Col 2: 11-13.

**The Lord’s Supper**

**LORD’S DAY 28**

75. **Q.** How does the Lord’s supper signify and seal to you that you share in Christ’s one sacrifice on the cross and in all his gifts?

**A.** In this way:

Christ has commanded me and all believers to eat of this broken bread and drink of this cup in remembrance of him.

With this command he gave these promises:\(^1\)

First, as surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me,
so surely was his body offered for me and his blood poured out for me on the cross.

Second, as surely as I receive from the hand of the minister and taste with my mouth the bread and the cup of the Lord as sure signs of Christ’s body and blood, so surely does he himself nourish and refresh my soul to everlasting life with his crucified body and shed blood.

\(^1\) Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:19, 20; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

76. **Q.** What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink his shed blood?

**A.** First, to accept with a believing heart all the suffering and the death of Christ,
and so receive
forgiveness of sins and life eternal.¹

Second,
to be united more and more to his sacred body
through the Holy Spirit,
who lives both in Christ and in us.²

Therefore, although Christ is in heaven³
and we are on earth,
yet we are flesh of his flesh
and bone of his bones,⁴
and we forever live and are governed
by one Spirit,
as the members of our body are
by one soul.⁵

¹ Jn 6:35, 40, 50-54.
² Jn 6:55, 56; 1 Cor 12:13.
³ Acts 1:9-11; 3:21; 1 Cor 11:26; Col 3:1.
⁴ 1 Cor 6:15, 17; Eph 5:29, 30; 1 Jn 4:13.

77. Q. Where has Christ promised
that he will nourish and refresh believers
with his body and blood
as surely as
they eat of this broken bread
and drink of this cup?

A. In the institution of the Lord’s supper:

_The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed,_
took bread, and when he had given thanks,
he broke it and said,
“This is my body, which is for you;
do this in remembrance of me.”

_In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,_
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood;
do this, whenever you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

_For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup,_
you proclaim the Lord’s death
_until he comes (1 Cor 11:23-26)._

This promise is repeated by Paul where he says:
_Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks_a participation in the blood of Christ?
_And is not the bread that we break_a participation in the body of Christ?
_Because there is one loaf,_
_we, who are many, are one body,_
_for we all partake of the one loaf_
_(1 Cor 10:16, 17)._

LORD’S DAY 29

78. Q. Are then the bread and wine
changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No.
Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into the blood of Christ
and is not the washing away of sins itself
but is simply God’s sign and pledge,¹
so also the bread in the Lord’s supper
does not become the body of Christ itself,²
although it is called Christ’s body³
in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.⁴

1 Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5.
2 Mt 26:26-29.
3 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26-28.
4 Gen 17:10, 11; Ex 12:11, 13; 1 Cor 10:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

79. Q. Why then does Christ call the bread his body
and the cup his blood,
or the new covenant in his blood,
and why does Paul speak of a participation
in the body and blood of Christ?

A. Christ speaks in this way for a good reason:
He wants to teach us by his supper
that as bread and wine sustain us
in this temporal life,
so his crucified body and shed blood
are true food and drink for our souls
to eternal life.¹

But, even more important,
he wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge,
first,
that through the working of the Holy Spirit
we share in his true body and blood
as surely as we receive with our mouth
these holy signs in remembrance of him,²
and, second,
that all his suffering and obedience
are as certainly ours
as if we personally
had suffered and paid for our sins.³

1 Jn 6:51, 55.
2 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26.
3 Rom 6:5-11.

LORD’S DAY 30

80. Q. What difference is there
between the Lord’s supper and the papal mass?

A. The Lord’s supper testifies to us,
first,
that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins
through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
which he himself accomplished on the cross
once for all;¹

and, second,
that through the Holy Spirit
we are grafted into Christ.²
who with his true body is now in heaven
at the right hand of the Father,\(^3\)
and this is where he wants to be worshipped.\(^4\)

But the mass teaches,
first,
that the living and the dead
do not have forgiveness of sins
through the suffering of Christ
unless he is still offered for them daily
by the priests;
and, second,
that Christ is bodily present
in the form of bread and wine,
and there is to be worshipped.

Therefore the mass is basically
nothing but a denial
of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ,
and an accursed idolatry.

\(^1\) Mt 26:28; Jn 19:30; Heb 7:27; 9:12, 25, 26; 10:10-18.
\(^2\) 1 Cor 6:17; 10:16, 17.
\(^3\) Jn 20:17; Acts 7:55, 56; Heb 1:3; 8:1.
\(^4\) Jn 4:21-24; Phil 3:20; Col 3:1; 1 Thess 1:10.

81. Q. Who are to come
to the table of the Lord?

A. Those who are truly displeased with themselves
because of their sins
and yet trust that these are forgiven them
and that their remaining weakness is covered
by the suffering and death of Christ,
and who also desire more and more
to strengthen their faith
and amend their life.

But hypocrites and those who do not repent
eat and drink judgment upon themselves.\(^1\)

\(^1\) 1 Cor 10:19-22; 11:26-32.

82. Q. Are those also to be admitted to the Lord’s supper
who by their confession and life
show that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No, for then the covenant of God
would be profaned
and his wrath kindled
against the whole congregation.\(^1\)

Therefore,
according to the command of Christ and his apostles,
the Christian church is duty-bound
to exclude such persons
by the keys of the kingdom of heaven,
until they amend their lives.

\(^1\) Ps 50:16; Is 1:11-17; 1 Cor 11:17-34.
83. Q. What are the keys of the kingdom of heaven?
A. The preaching of the holy gospel and church discipline.
   By these two the kingdom of heaven is opened to believers and closed to unbelievers.¹
   ¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 20:21-23.

84. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven opened and closed by the preaching of the gospel?
A. According to the command of Christ, the kingdom of heaven is opened when it is proclaimed and publicly testified to each and every believer that God has really forgiven all their sins for the sake of Christ’s merits, as often as they by true faith accept the promise of the gospel. The kingdom of heaven is closed when it is proclaimed and testified to all unbelievers and hypocrites that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them as long as they do not repent. According to this testimony of the gospel, God will judge both in this life and in the life to come.¹
   ¹ Mt 16:19; Jn 3:31-36; 20:21-23.

85. Q. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by church discipline?
A. According to the command of Christ, people who call themselves Christians but show themselves to be un-christian in doctrine or life are first repeatedly admonished in a brotherly manner. If they do not give up their errors or wickedness, they are reported to the church, that is, to the elders. If they do not heed also their admonitions, they are forbidden the use of the sacraments, and they are excluded by the elders from the Christian congregation,
and by God himself
from the kingdom of Christ. ¹
They are again received
as members of Christ
and of the church
when they promise and show
real amendment. ²

¹ Mt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:3-5; 11-13; 2 Thess 3:14, 15.
² Lk 15:20-24; 2 Cor 2:6-11.

The Third Part

OUR THANKFULNESS

LORD’S DAY 32

86. Q. Since we have been delivered
from our misery
by grace alone through Christ,
without any merit of our own,
why must we yet do good works?

A. Because Christ,
having redeemed us by his blood,
also renews us by his Holy Spirit
to be his image,
so that with our whole life
we may show ourselves thankful to God
for his benefits, ¹
and he may be praised by us. ²
Further, that we ourselves
may be assured of our faith
by its fruits, ³
and that by our godly walk of life
we may win our neighbours for Christ. ⁴

¹ Rom 6:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Pet 2:5-10.
² Mt 5:16; 1 Cor 6:19, 20.
³ Mt 7:17, 18; Gal 5:22-24; 2 Pet 1:10, 11.
⁴ Mt 5:14-16; Rom 14:17-19; 1 Pet 2:12; 3:1, 2.

87. Q. Can those be saved
who do not turn to God
from their ungrateful and impenitent
walk of life?

A. By no means.
Scripture says that no unchaste person,
idolater, adulterer,
thief, greedy person,
drunkenard, slanderer,
robber, or the like
shall inherit the kingdom of God. ¹

¹ 1 Cor 6:9, 10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5, 6; 1 Jn 3:14.
88. Q. What is the true repentance or conversion of man?
   A. It is the dying of the old nature and the coming to life of the new.\(^1\)
   \(^1\) Rom 6:1-11; 1 Cor 5:7; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22-24; Col 3:5-10.

89. Q. What is the dying of the old nature?
   A. It is to grieve with heartfelt sorrow that we have offended God by our sin, and more and more to hate it and flee from it.\(^1\)
   \(^1\) Ps 51:3, 4, 17; Joel 2:12, 13; Rom 8:12, 13; 2 Cor 7:10.

90. Q. What is the coming to life of the new nature?
   A. It is a heartfelt joy in God through Christ,\(^1\) and a love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works.\(^2\)
   \(^1\) Ps 51:8, 12; Is 57:15; Rom 5:1; 14:17.
   \(^2\) Rom 6:10, 11; Gal 2:20.

91. Q. But what are good works?
   A. Only those which are done out of true faith,\(^1\) in accordance with the law of God,\(^2\) and to his glory,\(^3\) and not those based on our own opinion or on precepts of men.\(^4\)
   \(^1\) Jn 15:5; Rom 14:23; Heb 11:6.
   \(^2\) Lev 18:4; 1 Sam 15:22; Eph 2:10.
   \(^3\) 1 Cor 10:31.
   \(^4\) Deut 12:32; Is 29:13; Ezek 20:18, 19; Mt 15:7-9.

The Ten Words

92. Q. What is the law of the LORD?
   A. God spoke all these words:
   
   \[ I \text{ am the LORD your God,} \]
   \[ \text{who brought you out of Egypt,} \]
   \[ \text{out of the land of slavery:} \]
   \[ 1. \text{You shall have no other gods before me.} \]
   \[ 2. \text{You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath} \]
   \[ \text{or in the waters below.} \]
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You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

3. You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.¹

¹ Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21.

93. Q. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two parts.

The first teaches us how to live in relation to God; the second, what duties we owe our neighbour.¹

¹ Mt 22:37-40.

94. Q. What does the LORD require in the first commandment?

A. That for the sake of my very salvation I avoid and flee all idolatry,¹ witchcraft, superstition,² and prayer to saints or to other creatures.³
Further,
that I rightly come to know
the only true God, trust in him alone,
submit to him
with all humility and patience,
expect all good from him only,
and love, fear, and honour him
with all my heart.

In short,
that I forsake all creatures rather than do the least thing against his will.

95. Q. What is idolatry?
A. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which to put our trust instead of, or in addition to, the only true God who has revealed himself in his Word.

96. Q. What does God require in the second commandment?
A. We are not to make an image of God in any way, nor to worship him in any other manner than he has commanded in his Word.

97. Q. May we then not make any image at all?
A. God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way.
Creatures may be portrayed, but God forbids us to make or have any images of them in order to worship them or to serve God through them.

1 1 Chron 16:26; Gal 4:8, 9; Eph 5:5; Phil 3:19.
2 Lev 10:1-7; Deut 12:30; 1 Sam 15:22, 23; Mt 15:9; Jn 4:23, 24.
98. Q. But may images not be tolerated in the churches as “books for the laity”?

A. No, for we should not be wiser than God. He wants his people to be taught not by means of dumb images but by the living preaching of his Word.

1 Jer 10:8; Hab 2:18-20.

LORD’S DAY 36

99. Q. What is required in the third commandment?

A. We are not to blaspheme or to abuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor to share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. Rather, we must use the holy name of God only with fear and reverence, so that we may rightly confess him, call upon him, and praise him in all our words and works.

1 Lev 24:10-17.
2 Lev 19:12.
3 Mt 5:37; Jas 5:12.
4 Lev 5:1; Prov 29:24.
5 Ps 99:1-5; Is 45:23; Jer 4:2.
6 Mt 10:32, 33; Rom 10:9, 10.
7 Ps 50:14, 15; 1 Tim 2:8.
8 Rom 2:24; Col 3:17; 1 Tim 6:1.

100. Q. Is the blaspheming of God's name by swearing and cursing such a grievous sin that God is angry also with those who do not prevent and forbid it as much as they can?

A. Certainly, for no sin is greater or provokes God’s wrath more than the blaspheming of his name. That is why he commanded it to be punished with death.

1 Lev 5:1.
2 Lev 24:16.

LORD’S DAY 37

101. Q. But may we swear an oath by the name of God in a godly manner?

A. Yes, when the government demands it of its subjects, or when necessity requires it,
in order to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to God’s glory and for our neighbour’s good. Such oath-taking is based on God’s Word\(^1\) and was therefore rightly used by saints in the Old and the New Testament.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Deut 6:13; 10:20; Jer 4:1, 2; Heb 6:16.  
\(^{2}\) Gen 21:24; 31:53; Josh 9:15; 1 Sam 24:22; 1 Kings 1:29, 30; Rom 1:9; 2 Cor 1:23.

102. Q. May we also swear by saints or other creatures?

A. No.

A lawful oath is a calling upon God, who alone knows the heart, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely.\(^1\) No creature is worthy of such honour.\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 1:23.  
\(^{2}\) Mt 5:34-37; 23:16-22; Jas 5:12.

**LORD’S DAY 38**

103. Q. What does God require in the fourth commandment?

A. First,

that the ministry of the gospel and the schools be maintained\(^1\)

and that, especially on the day of rest, I diligently attend the church of God\(^2\)

to hear God’s Word,\(^3\)

to use the sacraments,\(^4\)

to call publicly upon the LORD,\(^5\)

and to give Christian offerings for the poor.\(^6\)

Second,

that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, let the LORD work in me through his Holy Spirit, and so begin in this life the eternal Sabbath.\(^7\)

\(^{1}\) Deut 6:4-9; 20-25; 1 Cor 9:13, 14; 2 Tim 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit 1:5.  
\(^{2}\) Deut 12:5-12; Ps 40:9, 10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb 10:23-25.  
\(^{3}\) Rom 10:14-17; 1 Cor 14:26-33; 1 Tim 4:13.  
\(^{4}\) 1 Cor 11:23, 24.  
\(^{5}\) Col 3:16; 1 Tim 2:1.  
\(^{6}\) Ps 50:14; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 8 and 9.  
\(^{7}\) Is 66:23; Heb 4:9-11.

**LORD’S DAY 39**

104. Q. What does God require in the fifth commandment?

A. That I show all honour, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and to all those in authority over me,
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submit myself with due obedience
to their good instruction and discipline,¹
and also have patience with their weaknesses
and shortcomings,²
since it is God’s will
to govern us by their hand.³

¹ Ex 21:17; Prov 1:8; 4:1; Rom 13:1, 2; Eph 5:21, 22; 6:1-9; Col 3:18-4:1.

LORD’S DAY 40

105. Q. What does God require
in the sixth commandment?

A. I am not to dishonour, hate, injure,
or kill my neighbour
by thoughts, words, or gestures,
and much less by deeds,
whether personally or through another;¹
rather, I am to put away
all desire of revenge.²
Moreover, I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself.³
Therefore, also, the government bears the sword
to prevent murder.⁴

¹ Gen 9:6; Lev 19:17, 18; Mt 5:21, 22; 26:52.
² Prov 25:21, 22; Mt 18:35; Rom 12:19; Eph 4:26.
³ Mt 4:7; 26:52; Rom 13:11-14.

106. Q. But does this commandment
speak only of killing?

A. By forbidding murder God teaches us
that he hates the root of murder,
such as envy, hatred, anger, and desire of revenge,¹
and that he regards all these as murder.²

¹ Prov 14:30; Rom 1:29; 12:19; Gal 5:19-21; Jas 1:20; 1 Jn 2:9-11.
² 1 Jn 3:15.

107. Q. Is it enough, then,
that we do not kill our neighbour
in any such way?

A. No.
When God condemns envy, hatred, and anger,
he commands us

to love our neighbour as ourselves,¹
to show patience, peace, gentleness,
mercy, and friendliness toward him,²

to protect him from harm as much as we can,
and to do good even to our enemies.³

¹ Mt 7:12; 22:39; Rom 12:10.
² Mt 5:5; Lk 6:36; Rom 12:10, 18; Gal 6:1, 2; Eph 4:2; Col 3:12; 1 Pet 3:8.
³ Ex 23:4, 5; Mt 5:44, 45; Rom 12:20.
108. Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?
   A. That all unchastity is cursed by God.¹
      We must therefore detest it from the heart²
      and live chaste and disciplined lives,
      both within and outside of holy marriage.³
      ¹ Lev 18:30; Eph 5:3-5.
      ² Jude 22, 23.
      ³ 1 Cor 7:1-9; 1 Thess 4:3-8; Heb 13:4.

109. Q. Does God in this commandment
      forbid nothing more than adultery
      and similar shameful sins?
   A. Since we, body and soul,
      are temples of the Holy Spirit,
      it is God’s will
      that we keep ourselves pure and holy.
      Therefore he forbids all unchaste acts,
      gestures, words, thoughts, desires,¹
      and whatever may entice us to unchastity.²
      ¹ Mt 5:27-29; 1 Cor 6:18-20; Eph 5:3, 4.
      ² 1 Cor 15:33; Eph 5:18.

110. Q. What does God forbid
      in the eighth commandment?
   A. God forbids not only outright theft and robbery¹
      but also such wicked schemes and devices as
      false weights and measures,
      deceptive merchandising,
      counterfeit money,
      and usury;²
      we must not defraud our neighbour in any way,
      whether by force or by show of right.³
      In addition God forbids all greed⁴
      and all abuse or squandering of his gifts.⁵
      ¹ Ex 22:1; 1 Cor 5:9, 10; 6:9, 10.
      ² Deut 25:13-16; Ps 15:5; Prov 11:1; 12:22; Ezek 45:9-12; Lk 6:35.
      ⁴ Lk 12:15; Eph 5:5.
      ⁵ Prov 21:20; 23:20, 21; Lk 16:10-13.

111. Q. What does God require of you
      in this commandment?
   A. I must promote my neighbour’s good
      wherever I can and may,
      deal with him
      as I would like others to deal with me,
      and work faithfully
      so that I may be able to give
      to those in need.¹
      ¹ Is 58:5-10; Mt 7:12; Gal 6:9, 10; Eph 4:28.
112. Q. What is required in the ninth commandment?
   A. I must not give false testimony against anyone, twist no one’s words, not gossip or slander, nor condemn or join in condemning anyone rashly and unheard. Rather, I must avoid all lying and deceit as the devil’s own works, under penalty of God’s heavy wrath.
   In court and everywhere else, I must love the truth, speak and confess it honestly, and do what I can to defend and promote my neighbour’s honour and reputation.

1 Ps 15; Prov 19:5, 9; 21:28; Mt 7:1; Lk 6:37; Rom 1:28-32.
2 Lev 19:11, 12; Prov 12:22; 13:5; Jn 8:44; Rev 21:8.
3 1 Cor 13:6; Eph 4:25.
4 1 Pet 3:8, 9; 4:8.

113. Q. What does the tenth commandment require of us?
   A. That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any of God’s commandments should ever arise in our heart. Rather, with all our heart we should always hate all sin and delight in all righteousness.

1 Ps 19:7-14; 139:23, 24; Rom 7:7, 8.

114. Q. But can those converted to God keep these commandments perfectly?
   A. No.
   In this life even the holiest have only a small beginning of this obedience. Nevertheless, with earnest purpose they do begin to live not only according to some but to all the commandments of God.

1 Eccles 7:20; Rom 7:14, 15; 1 Cor 13:9; 1 Jn 1:8.
2 Ps 1:1, 2; Rom 7:22-25; Phil 3:12-16.

115. Q. If in this life no one can keep the ten commandments perfectly, why does God have them preached so strictly?
A. First,
so that throughout our life
we may more and more become aware of
our sinful nature,
and therefore seek more eagerly
the forgiveness of sins and righteousness in Christ.¹

Second,
so that, while praying to God
for the grace of the Holy Spirit,
we may never stop striving
to be renewed more and more
after God’s image,
until after this life we reach
the goal of perfection.²

¹ Ps 32:5; Rom 3:19-26; 7:7, 24, 25; 1 Jn 1:9.
² 1 Cor 9:24; Phil 3:12-14; 1 Jn 3:1-3.

Prayer

LORD’S DAY 45

116. Q. Why is prayer necessary for Christians?
A. Because prayer is the most important part
of the thankfulness
which God requires of us.¹

Moreover, God will give
his grace and the Holy Spirit
only to those who constantly
and with heartfelt longing
ask him for these gifts
and thank him for them.²

¹ Ps 50:14, 15; 116:12-19; 1 Thess 5:16-18.
² Mt 7:7, 8; Lk 11:9-13.

117. Q. What belongs to a prayer
which pleases God
and is heard by him?
A. First,
we must from the heart
call upon the one true God only,
who has revealed himself in his Word,
for all that he has commanded us to pray.¹

Second,
we must thoroughly know
our need and misery,
so that we may humble ourselves
before God.²

Third,
we must rest on this firm foundation
that, although we do not deserve it,
God will certainly hear our prayer for the sake of Christ our Lord, as he has promised us in his Word. 

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18. Q. What has God commanded us to ask of him?

A. All the things we need for body and soul, as included in the prayer which Christ our Lord himself taught us.

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19. Q. What is the Lord’s prayer?

A. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

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20. Q. Why has Christ commanded us to address God as our Father?

A. To awaken in us at the very beginning of our prayer that childlike reverence and trust toward God which should be basic to our prayer: God has become our Father through Christ and will much less deny us what we ask of him in faith than our fathers would refuse us earthly things.

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21. Q. Why is there added, in heaven?

A. These words teach us not to think of God’s heavenly majesty in an earthly manner, and to expect from his almighty power...
all things we need
for body and soul.²
² Mt 6:25-34; Rom 8:31, 32.

LORD’S DAY 47

122. Q. What is the first petition?
   A. Hallowed be your name.
      That is:
      Grant us first of all
         that we may rightly know you,¹
         and sanctify, glorify, and praise you
         in all your works,
         in which shine forth
         your almighty power,
         wisdom, goodness, righteousness,
         mercy, and truth.²
      Grant us also
         that we may so direct our whole life –
         our thoughts, words, and actions –
         that your name is not blasphemed because of us
         but always honoured and praised.³
¹ Jer 9:23, 24; 31: 33, 34; Mt 16:17; Jn 17:3.
² Ex 34:5-8; Ps 145; Jer 32:16-20; Lk 1:46-55, 68-75; Rom 11: 33-36.
³ Ps 115:1; Mt 5:16.

LORD’S DAY 48

123. Q. What is the second petition?
   A. Your kingdom come.
      That is:
      So rule us by your Word and Spirit
         that more and more we submit to you.¹
      Preserve and increase your church.²
      Destroy the works of the devil,
         every power that raises itself against you,
         and every conspiracy against your holy Word.³
      Do all this
         until the fullness of your kingdom comes,
         wherein you shall be all in all.⁴
¹ Ps 119:5, 105; 143:10; Mt 6:33.
² Ps 51:18; 122:6-9; Mt 16:18; Acts 2:42-47.
³ Rom 16:20; 1 Jn 3:8.
⁴ Rom 8:22, 23; 1 Cor 15:28; Rev 22: 17, 20.

LORD’S DAY 49

124. Q. What is the third petition?
   A. Your will be done,
      on earth as it is in heaven.
That is:
Grant that we and all men
may deny our own will,
and without any murmuring
obey your will,
for it alone is good.¹
Grant also that everyone
may carry out the duties
of his office and calling²
as willingly and faithfully
as the angels in heaven.³

¹ Mt 7:21; 16:24-26; Lk 22:42; Rom 12:1, 2; Tit 2:11, 12.
² 1 Cor 7:17-24; Eph 6:5-9.
³ Ps 103:20, 21.

LORD’S DAY 50

125. Q. What is the fourth petition?
A. *Give us today our daily bread.*
That is:
Provide us with all our bodily needs¹
so that we may acknowledge
that you are the only fountain of all good,²
and that our care and labour,
and also your gifts,
cannot do us any good
without your blessing.³
Grant, therefore, that we may
withdraw our trust
from all creatures
and place it only in you.⁴

¹ Ps 104:27-30; 145:15, 16; Mt 6:25-34.
² Acts 14:17; 17:25; Jas 1:17.
³ Deut 8:3; Ps 37:16; 127:1, 2; 1 Cor 15:58.
⁴ Ps 55:22; 62; 146; Jer 17:5-8; Heb 13:5, 6.

LORD’S DAY 51

126. Q. What is the fifth petition?
A. *Forgive us our debts,*
   *as we also have forgiven our debtors.*
That is:
For the sake of Christ’s blood,
do not impute to us,
wretched sinners,
any of our transgressions,
nor the evil which still clings to us,¹
as we also find this evidence of your grace in us
that we are fully determined
wholeheartedly to forgive our neighbour.²

¹ Ps 51:1-7; 143:2; Rom 8:1; 1 Jn 2:1, 2.
² Mt 6:14, 15; 18:21-35.
127. Q. What is the sixth petition?

A. *And lead us not into temptation,*
   *but deliver us from the evil one.*

That is:
In ourselves we are so weak
   that we cannot stand even for a moment.¹
Moreover, our sworn enemies –
   the devil,² the world,³ and our own flesh⁴ –
   do not cease to attack us.

Will you, therefore,
   uphold and strengthen us
   by the power of your Holy Spirit,
   so that in this spiritual war⁵
   we may not go down to defeat,
   but always firmly resist our enemies,
   until we finally obtain
   the complete victory.⁶

¹ Ps 103:14-16; Jn 15:1-5.
² 2 Cor 11:14; Eph 6:10-13; 1 Pet 5:8.
³ Jn 15:18-21.
⁴ Rom 7:23; Gal 5:17.
⁵ Mt 10:19, 20; 26:41; Mk 13:33; Rom 5:3-5.
⁶ 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23.

128. Q. How do you conclude your prayer?

A. *For yours is the kingdom*
   *and the power*
   *and the glory forever.*

That is:
All this we ask of you
   because, as our King,
   having power over all things,
   you are both willing and able
   to give us all that is good,¹
and because not we
   but your holy name
   should so receive all glory
   forever.²

² Ps 115:1; Jer 33:8, 9; Jn 14:13.

129. Q. What does the word *Amen* mean?

A. *Amen* means:
   It is true and certain.
   For God has much more certainly
   heard my prayer
   than I feel in my heart
   that I desire this of him.¹

¹ Is 65:24; 2 Cor 1:20; 2 Tim 2:13.
THE CANONS OF DORT

The third of our doctrinal standards is the Canons of Dort, also called the Five Articles against the Remonstrants. These are statements of doctrine adopted by the Reformed Synod of Dort in 1618-1619. This Synod had an international dimension, since it was not only composed of the delegates of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands but also attended by twenty-seven representatives of foreign churches.

The Synod of Dort was held in view of the serious disturbance in the Reformed churches caused by the rise and spread of Arminianism. Arminius, a theological professor at the University of Leyden, and his followers departed from the Reformed faith in their teaching concerning five important points. They taught conditional election on the ground of foreseen faith, universal atonement, partial depravity, resistible grace, and the possibility of a lapse from grace. These views were rejected by the Synod, and the opposite views were embodied in what are now called the Canons of Dort or the Five Articles against the Remonstrants. In these Canons the Synod set forth the Reformed doctrine on these points, namely, unconditional election, particular atonement, total depravity, invincible grace, and the perseverance of the saints.

Each of the Canons consists of a positive and a negative part, the former being an exposition of the Reformed doctrine on the subject, and the latter a repudiation of the corresponding Arminian error. Although in form there are only four chapters, occasioned by the combination of the third and fourth sections into one, we properly speak of five Canons, and the third chapter is always designated as Chapter III/IV. All office-bearers of our churches are required to subscribe to these Canons as well as to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism.

FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

DIVINE ELECTION AND REPROBATION

ARTICLE 1
ALL MANKIND CONDEMNABLE BEFORE GOD

Since all men have sinned in Adam, lie under the curse, and deserve eternal death,¹ God would have done no one an injustice if it had been his will to leave the whole human race in sin and under the curse, and to condemn it on account of its sin, according to these words of the apostle: so that... the whole world [may be] held accountable to God. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:19, 23); and, the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).

¹Rom 5:12.

ARTICLE 2
THE SENDING OF THE SON OF GOD

But this is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world (1 Jn 4:9), that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16).

ARTICLE 3
THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

So that men may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends heralds of this most joyful message to whom he will and when he wills.¹ By their ministry men are called to repentance and to faith in Christ crucified.² For how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10:14-15).

¹Is 52:7; ²1 Cor 1:23-24.

ARTICLE 4
A TWOFOLD OUTCOME

The wrath of God remains upon those who do not believe this gospel.¹ But those who receive it and embrace Jesus the Saviour with a true and living faith are delivered by him from the wrath of God and from destruction, and are given eternal life.²

¹Jn 3:36; ²Mk 16:16; Rom 10:9.
ARTICLE 5
THE CAUSE OF UNBELIEF, THE SOURCE OF FAITH

The cause or guilt for this unbelief, as well as for all other sins, is by no means in God, but rather in man. Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through him, however, is the free gift of God, as it is written: "By grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). Similarly: "It has been granted to you on behalf of Christ... to believe on him" (Phil 1:29).

1 Heb 4:6.

ARTICLE 6
GOD’S ETERNAL DECREE

That God in time confers the gift of faith on some, and not on others, proceeds from his eternal decree. For he knows all his works from eternity, and he works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Eph 1:11). According to this decree he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, no matter how hard they may be, and inclines them to believe; those not elected, however, he leaves in their own wickedness and hardness by a just judgment. And here especially is disclosed to us the profound, merciful, and at the same time just distinction between men equally worthy of condemnation, or that decree of election and reprobation which has been revealed in God’s Word. Although perverse, impure, and unstable men twist this decree to their own destruction, it provides unspeakable comfort for holy and God-fearing souls.


ARTICLE 7
ELECTION DEFINED

Election is the unchangeable purpose of God whereby, before the foundation of the world, out of the whole human race, which had fallen by its own fault out of its original integrity into sin and perdition, he has, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his will, out of mere grace, chosen in Christ to salvation a definite number of specific persons, neither better nor more worthy than others, but involved together with them in a common misery. He has also from eternity appointed Christ to be the Mediator and Head of all the elect and the foundation of salvation and thus he decreed to give to Christ those who were to be saved, and effectually to call and draw them into his communion through his Word and Spirit. He decreed to give them true faith in him, to justify them, to sanctify them, and, after having powerfully kept them in the fellowship of his Son, finally to glorify them, for the demonstration of his mercy and the praise of the riches of his glorious grace. As it is written: God chose us in Christ, before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves (Eph 1:4-6). And elsewhere, those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified (Rom 8:30).

1 Eph 1:4, 11; 2 Jn 17:2; 3 Jn 17:12; 4 Jn 17:24; Jn 6:37, 44.

ARTICLE 8
ONE DECREE OF ELECTION

There are not various decrees of this election, but there is one and the same decree concerning all those that are to be saved under both the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that the good pleasure, purpose, and counsel of the will of God is one.

According to this purpose he has chosen us from eternity both to grace and to
glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which he prepared for us\textsuperscript{2} that we should walk in it.

\textsuperscript{1} Deut 7:7; 9:6; Eph 1:4-5; \textsuperscript{2} Eph 2:10.

\textbf{ARTICLE 9}

\textbf{ELECTION NOT BASED ON FORESEEN FAITH}

This election is not based on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition, as a cause or condition in man required for being chosen, but men are chosen to faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, and so on. Election, therefore, is the fountain of every saving good, from which flow faith, holiness, and other saving gifts, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects.\textsuperscript{1} This the apostle teaches when he says, \textit{He chose us} (not because we were, but are) \textit{to be holy and blameless in his sight} (Eph 1:4).\textsuperscript{1} Rom 8:30.

\textbf{ARTICLE 10}

\textbf{ELECTION BASED ON GOD’S GOOD PLEASURE}

The cause of this gracious election is solely the good pleasure of God. This good pleasure does not consist in this, that out of all possible conditions God chose certain qualities or actions of men as a condition for salvation, but in this, that out of the common mass of sinners he adopted certain persons to be his own possession. For it is written, \textit{Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad} (Rom 9:11-13), and so on, she (namely, Rebecca), was told, \textit{“The older will serve the younger”} (Gen 25:23). Just as it is written: \textit{“I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated”} (Mal 1:2-3). And, \textit{all who were appointed for eternal life believed} (Acts 13:48).\textsuperscript{1} Deut 29:29; \textsuperscript{2} Cor 2:10-11; \textsuperscript{3} Cor 13:5; \textsuperscript{4} Cor 7:10; \textsuperscript{5} Mt 5:6.

\textbf{ARTICLE 11}

\textbf{ELECTION UNCHANGEABLE}

As God himself is most wise, unchangeable, all-knowing and almighty, so his election can neither be undone and re-done, nor changed, revoked, or annulled; neither can the elect be cast away,\textsuperscript{1} nor their number be diminished.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} Jn 6:37; \textsuperscript{2} Jn 10:28.

\textbf{ARTICLE 12}

\textbf{THE ASSURANCE OF ELECTION}

The elect in due time, though in various stages and in different measure, are made certain of this their eternal and unchangeable election to salvation. They attain this assurance, however, not by inquisitively prying into the hidden and deep things of God,\textsuperscript{1} but by observing in themselves,\textsuperscript{2} with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unfailing fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God – such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins,\textsuperscript{3} and a hunger and thirst for righteousness.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{1} Deut 29:29; \textsuperscript{2} Cor 2:10-11; \textsuperscript{3} Cor 13:5; \textsuperscript{4} Cor 7:10; \textsuperscript{5} Mt 5:6.

\textbf{ARTICLE 13}

\textbf{THE VALUE OF THIS ASSURANCE}

The awareness and assurance of this election provide the children of God with greater reason for daily humbling themselves before God, for adoring the depth of his mercies, for cleansing themselves,\textsuperscript{1} and for fervently loving him in turn who first so greatly loved them.\textsuperscript{2} It is therefore not at all true that this doctrine of election and the reflection on it makes them lax in observing the commands of God or falsely secure. In the just judgment of God, this usually happens to those who rashly presume to have the grace of election, or idly and boldly chatter about it, but refuse to walk in the ways of the elect.

\textsuperscript{1} Jn 3:3; \textsuperscript{2} Jn 4:19.
ARTICLE 14
HOW ELECTION IS TO BE TAUGHT

This doctrine of divine election, according to the most wise counsel of God, was preached by the prophets, by Christ himself, and by the apostles, under the Old as well as the New Testament, and was then committed to writing in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, also today this doctrine should be taught in the church of God, for which it was particularly intended, in its proper time and place, provided it be done with a spirit of discretion, in a reverent and holy manner, without inquisitively prying into the ways of the most High, to the glory of God’s most holy name, and for the living comfort of his people.  


ARTICLE 15
REPROBATION DESCRIBED

Holy Scripture illustrates and recommends to us this eternal and undeserved grace of our election, especially when it further declares that not all men are elect but that some have not been elected, or have been passed by in the eternal election of God. Out of his most free, most just, blameless, and unchangeable good pleasure, God has decreed to leave them in the common misery into which they have by their own fault plunged themselves, and not to give them saving faith and the grace of conversion. These, having been left in their own ways and under his just judgment, God has decreed finally to condemn and punish eternally, not only on account of their unbelief but also on account of all their other sins, in order to display his justice. This is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought is blasphemous!), but rather declares him to be its awesome, blameless, and just judge and avenger.

1 Rom 9:22; 2 Cor 1:12; Rom 5:11; 3 Phil 3:3; Rom 7:24; 4 Is 42:3; Mt 12:20; 5 Mt 13:22; 6 Heb 12:29.

ARTICLE 16
RESPONSES TO THE DOCTRINE OF REPROBATION

Some do not yet clearly discern in themselves a living faith in Christ, an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ; nevertheless, they use the means through which God has promised to work these things in us. They ought not to be alarmed when reprobation is mentioned, nor to count themselves among the reprobate. Rather, they must diligently continue in the use of these means, fervently desire a time of more abundant grace, and expect it with reverence and humility. Others seriously desire to be converted to God, to please him only, and to be delivered from the body of death. Yet they cannot reach that point on the way of godliness and faith which they would like. They should be even less terrified by the doctrine of reprobation, since a merciful God has promised not to snuff out the smouldering wick nor to break the bruised reed.

Still others disregard God and the Saviour Jesus Christ and have completely given themselves over to the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth. For them this doctrine of reprobation is rightly fearsome as long as they do not seriously turn to God.

1 Jas 2:26; 2 Cor 1:12; Rom 5:11; 3 Phil 3:3; Rom 7:24; 4 Is 42:3; Mt 12:20; 5 Mt 13:22; 6 Heb 12:29.

ARTICLE 17
CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS WHO DIE IN INFANCY

We must judge concerning the will of God from his Word, which declares that the children of believers are holy, not by nature but in virtue of the covenant of grace, in which they are included with their parents. Therefore, God-fearing par-
ents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in their infancy.\textsuperscript{2}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[1] Gen 17:7; Is 59:21; \textsuperscript{2} Acts 2:39; 1 Cor 7:14.
\end{enumerate}

**ARTICLE 18**

**NOT PROTEST BUT ADORATION**

To those who complain about this grace of undeserved election and the severity of righteous reprobation,\textsuperscript{1} we reply with this word of the apostle: *But who are you, O man, to talk back to God?* (Rom 9:20). And with this word of our Saviour: *Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belong to me?*\textsuperscript{2}

We, however, with reverent adoration of these mysteries, exclaim with the apostle: *Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen* (Rom 11:33-36).

\begin{enumerate}
\item[1] Job 34:34-37; \textsuperscript{2} Mt 20:15.
\end{enumerate}

**REJECTION OF ERRORS**

Having explained the true doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, Synod rejects the following errors:

\begin{enumerate}
\item **1**

Error: The will of God to save those who would believe and persevere in faith and obedience is the whole and entire decree of election of salvation and that nothing else concerning this decree has been revealed in God’s Word.

Refutation: This error is deceptive and clearly contradicts Scripture, which declares not only that God will save those who believe but also that he has chosen specific persons from eternity. Within time he grants to these elect, above others, both faith in Christ and perseverance. *I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world* (Jn 17:6). And all who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48). *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight* (Eph 1:4).

\item **2**

Error: There are various kinds of divine election to eternal life. One is general and indefinite, another is particular and definite. The latter in turn is either incomplete, revocable, non-decisive, and conditional, or it is complete, irrevocable, decisive, and absolute. In the same fashion there is an election to faith and another to salvation. Therefore election can be to justifying faith, without being decisive to salvation.

Refutation: All this is an invention of the human mind without any basis in the Scriptures. The doctrine of election is thus corrupted and the golden chain of our salvation broken: *And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified* (Rom 8:30).

\item **3**

Error: The good pleasure and purpose of God of which Scripture speaks in the doctrine of election is not that he chose certain specific persons and not others, but that out of all possible conditions (such as the works of the law) he chose or selected the act of faith, which in itself is without merit, as well as the imperfect obedience of faith, to be a condition of salvation. In his grace he wished to count such faith as complete obedience and worthy of the reward of eternal life.
Refutation: This offensive error deprives God’s good pleasure and Christ’s merits of all efficacy, and draws people away from the truth of gracious justification and from the simplicity of Scripture. It contradicts the word of the apostle: God has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time (2 Tim 1:9).

4

Error: Election to faith depends on the condition that man should use the light of nature properly, and that he be pious, humble, meek, and fit for eternal life.

Refutation: If this were true, election would depend on man. This smacks of the teaching of Pelagius and is in open conflict with the teaching of the apostle, All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:3-9).

5

Error: Incomplete and non-decisive election of specific persons to salvation took place on the ground of foreseen faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness, which either began or continued for some time. Complete and decisive election, however, occurred because of foreseen perseverance in faith, conversion, holiness, and godliness till the end. This is the gracious and evangelical worthiness because of which the person who is chosen is more worthy than the one who is not chosen. Therefore faith, obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are not fruits of unchangeable election to glory. Instead, they are necessary conditions and causes required and foreseen as accomplished in those who are to be fully elected.

Refutation: This error militates against all of Scripture, which constantly impresses the following upon us: Election is not by works but by him who calls (Rom 9:11); and all who were appointed for eternal life believed (Acts 13:48); he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Eph 1:4); you did not choose me, but I chose you (Jn 15:16); And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace (Rom 11:6); This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins (1 Jn 4:10).

6

Error: Not every election to salvation is unchangeable. Some of the elect can and do indeed perish eternally, notwithstanding any decree of God.

Refutation: This gross error makes God changeable, destroys the comfort which the believers obtain from the firmness of their election, and contradicts Holy Scripture: The elect cannot be led astray (Mt 24:24); And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day (Jn 6:39); those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified (Rom 8:30).
ARTICLE 1
THE PUNISHMENT WHICH GOD’S JUSTICE REQUIRES

God is not only supremely merciful but also supremely just. And as he himself has revealed in his Word,\(^1\) his justice requires that our sins, committed against his infinite majesty, should be punished\(^2\) not only in this age but also in the age to come, both in body and soul. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is made to the justice of God.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Ex 34:6-7; \(^2\) Rom 5:16; \(^3\) Gal 3:10.

ARTICLE 2
THE SATISFACTION MADE BY CHRIST

We ourselves, however, cannot make this satisfaction and cannot free ourselves from God’s wrath. God, therefore,
in his infinite mercy has given his only-begotten Son as our Surety.\(^1\) For us or in our place he was made sin\(^2\) and a curse on the cross\(^3\) so that he might make satisfaction on our behalf.

\(^1\) Jn 3:16, Rom 5:8; \(^2\) 2 Cor 5:21; \(^3\) Gal 3:13.

**ARTICLE 3**

**THE INFINITE VALUE OF CHRIST’S DEATH**

This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins,\(^1\) of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Heb 9:26, 28; 10:14; \(^2\) 1 Jn 2:2.

**ARTICLE 4**

**WHY HIS DEATH HAS INFINITE VALUE**

This death is of such great value and worth because the person who submitted to it is not only a true and perfectly holy man,\(^1\) but also the only-begotten Son of God,\(^2\) of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these qualifications were necessary for our Saviour. Further, this death is of such great value and worth because it was accompanied by a sense of the wrath and curse of God\(^3\) which we by our sins had deserved.

\(^1\) Heb 4:15; 7:26; \(^2\) 1 Jn 4:9; \(^3\) Mt 27:46.

**ARTICLE 5**

**THE UNIVERSAL PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL**

The promise of the gospel is that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life.\(^1\) This promise ought to be announced and proclaimed universally and without discrimination to all peoples and to all men,\(^2\) to whom God in his good pleasure sends the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Jn 3:16; \(^2\) 1 Cor 1:23, Mt 28:19; \(^3\) Acts 2:38; 16:31.

**CHAPTER II**

**ARTICLE 6**

**WHY SOME DO NOT BELIEVE**

That, however, many who have been called by the gospel neither repent nor believe in Christ but perish in unbelief\(^1\) does not happen because of any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross, but through their own fault.

\(^1\) Mt 22:14; Ps 95:11; Heb 4:6.

**ARTICLE 7**

**WHY OTHERS DO BELIEVE**

But to those who truly believe and by the death of Christ are freed from their sins and saved from perdition, this benefit comes only through God’s grace, given to them from eternity in Christ.\(^1\) God owes this grace to no one.\(^2\)

\(^1\) 2 Cor 5:18; \(^2\) Eph 2:8-9.

**ARTICLE 8**

**THE EFFICACY OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

For this was the most free counsel of God the Father, that the life-giving and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect.\(^1\) It was his most gracious will and intent to give to them alone justifying faith and thereby to bring them unfailingly to salvation.\(^2\) This means: God willed that Christ through the blood of the cross\(^3\) (by which he confirmed the new covenant)\(^4\) should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation,\(^5\) and tongue all those, and those only, who from eternity were chosen to salvation and were given to him by the Father. God further willed that Christ should give to them faith,\(^6\) which, together with other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he acquired for them by his death; that he should cleanse them by his blood from all sins,\(^7\) both original and actual, both those committed after faith and before faith; and that he should guard
them faithfully to the end and at last present them to himself in splendour without any spot or wrinkle. 9

1 Jn 17:9; 2 Eph 5:25-27; 3 Lk 22:20; 4 Heb 8:6; 5 Rev 5:9; 6 Phil 1:29; 7 1 Jn 1:7; 8 Jn 10:28; 9 Eph 5:27.

ARTICLE 9
THE FULFILMENT OF GOD’S COUNSEL

This counsel, proceeding from eternal love for the elect, has from the beginning of the world to the present time been powerfully fulfilled, and will also continue to be fulfilled, though the gates of hell vainly try to frustrate it. 1 In due time the elect will be gathered together into one; 2 and there will always be a church of believers, 3 founded on the blood of Christ. This church shall steadfastly love and faithfully serve him as her Saviour (who as bridegroom for his bride laid down his life for her on the cross) 4 and celebrate his praises here and through all eternity.

1 Mt 16:18; 2 Jn 11:52; 3 1 Kgs 19:18; 4 Eph 5:25.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the death of Christ and the redemption of man by this death, Synod rejects the following errors:

1 Error: God the Father has ordained his Son to the death of the cross without a specific and definite decree to save any. What Christ obtained by his death might have been necessary, profitable, and valuable, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect, and intact, even though the redemption he acquired had actually never been applied to any person.

Refutation: This doctrine is offensive to the wisdom of the Father and the merits of Jesus Christ and is contrary to Scripture. For our Saviour says: I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them (Jn 10:15, 27). And the prophet Isaiah says concerning the Saviour: Though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand (Is 53:10). Finally, this error contradicts the article of faith concerning the catholic Christian church.

2 Error: It was not the purpose of Christ’s death that he should confirm the new covenant of grace by his blood, but only that he should acquire for the Father the mere right to establish once more with man such a covenant as he might please, whether of grace or of works.

Refutation: This militates against Scripture, which teaches that Christ has become the Surety and Mediator of a better, that is, a new covenant, and that a will takes effect only at death. 1

1 Heb 7:22; 9:15, 17.

3 Error: By his satisfaction Christ did not really merit for anyone either salvation itself or faith by which this satisfaction of Christ to salvation is effectually made one’s own. He acquired for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as he might desire. It depends, however, on the free will of man to fulfil these conditions. Therefore it was possible that either no one or all men would fulfil them.

Refutation: Those who teach this error think contumeliously of the death of Christ, do not at all acknowledge its most important fruit or benefit, and bring back out of hell the Pelagian error.

4 Error: The new covenant of grace which God the Father, through the mediation of the death of Christ, made with man, does not consist herein that we are
justified before God and saved by faith, inasmuch as it accepts the merit of Christ. It consists in the fact that God has revoked the demand of perfect obedience of the law and regards faith as such and the obedience of faith, though imperfect, as the perfect obedience of the law. He graciously deems it worthy of the reward of eternal life.

Refutation: This doctrine contradicts Scripture: They are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood (Rom 3:24, 25). Those who teach this error proclaim, as did the ungodly Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, against the consensus of the whole church.

5

Error: All men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant, so that no one is liable to condemnation on account of original sin, and no one shall be condemned because of it, but all are free from the guilt of original sin.

Refutation: This opinion is in conflict with Scripture, which teaches that we are by nature objects of wrath (Eph 2:3).

6

Error: As far as God is concerned, he wished to bestow equally upon all people the benefits acquired by the death of Christ; however, some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life and others do not. This distinction depends on their own free will, which applies itself to the grace that is offered indifferently, and not on the special gift of mercy which so powerfully works in them that they rather than others apply this grace to themselves.

Refutation: Those who teach this misuse the difference between the acquisition and the application of salvation and confuse the minds of imprudent and inexperienced people. While they pretend to present this distinction in a sound sense, they seek to instil into the minds of people the pernicious poison of Pelagianism.

7

Error: Christ could not die, did not need to die, and did not die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, since these do not need the death of Christ.

Refutation: This doctrine contradicts the apostle, who declares: The Son of God loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20). Likewise: Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died (Rom 8:33, 34), namely, for them. And the Saviour assures us: I lay down my life for the sheep (Jn 10:15). And: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends (Jn 15:12, 13).
THIRD AND FOURTH HEADS OF DOCTRINE
THE CORRUPTION OF MAN, HIS CONVERSION TO GOD,
AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT OCCURS

ARTICLE 1
THE EFFECT OF THE FALL

In the beginning man was created in the image of God. He was adorned in his mind with true and wholesome knowledge of his Creator and of all spiritual things; his will and heart were upright, all his affections pure, and therefore man was completely holy. 1

But rebelling against God through the instigation of the devil and through his own free will, he deprived himself of these excellent gifts, 2 and instead brought upon himself blindness, horrible darkness, futility, and perverseness of judgment in his mind; wickedness, rebelliousness, and stubbornness in his will and heart; and impurity in all his affections. 3


ARTICLE 2
THE SPREAD OF CORRUPTION

Since after the fall man became corrupt, he as a corrupt father brought forth corrupt children. 1 Thus the corruption has spread from Adam to all his descendants, 2 with the exception of Christ alone, 3 not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old maintained, but by the propagation of a perverted nature, according to the righteous judgment of God.

1 Job 14:4; Ps 51:7; 2 Rom 5:12; 3 Heb 4:15.

ARTICLE 3
MAN’S TOTAL INABILITY

Therefore all men are conceived in sin and are born as children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin. 1 And without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit 2 they neither will nor can return to God, reform their depraved nature, or prepare themselves for its reformation.

1 Eph 2:1, 3; Jn 8:34; Rom 6:16-17; 2 Jn 3:3-6; Tit 3:5.

ARTICLE 4
THE INADEQUACY OF THE LIGHT OF NATURE

To be sure, there is left in man after the fall, some light of nature, whereby he retains some notions about God, 1 about natural things, and about the difference between what is honourable and shameful, and shows some regard for virtue and outward order. But so far is he from arriving at the saving knowledge of God and true conversion through this light of nature that he does not even use it properly in natural and civil matters. Rather, whatever this light may be, man wholly pollutes it in various ways and suppresses it by his wickedness. In doing so, he renders himself without excuse before God. 2


ARTICLE 5
THE INADEQUACY OF THE LAW

What holds for the light of nature also applies to the Ten Commandments, given by God through Moses particularly to the Jews. For though it reveals the greatness of sin, and more and more convicts man of his guilt, yet it neither points out a remedy nor gives him power to rise out of this misery. Rather, weakened by the flesh, it leaves the transgressor under the curse. Man cannot, therefore, through the law obtain saving grace. 1

1 Rom 3:19-20; 7:10, 13; Rom 8:3; 2 Cor 3:6-7.
ARTICLE 6
THE NEED FOR THE GOSPEL

What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit through the word or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel of the Messiah, by which it has pleased God to save men who believe, both under the old and under the new dispensation.

ARTICLE 7
WHY THE GOSPEL IS SENT TO SOME AND NOT TO OTHERS

Under the old dispensation God revealed this mystery of his will to few. Under the new dispensation, however, he took the distinction between the peoples away and revealed it to a larger number. The cause of this very distribution of the gospel is not to be ascribed to the worthiness of one people above another, nor to the better use of the light of nature, but to the sovereign good pleasure and undeserved love of God. Therefore we to whom so great a grace is granted, beyond and contrary to all we deserve, ought to acknowledge it with a humble and grateful heart. But as regards to others whom this grace is not given, we ought with the apostle to adore the severity and righteousness of the judgments of God but by no means inquisitively to pry into them.

ARTICLE 8
THE EARNEST CALL BY THE GOSPEL

But as many as are called by the gospel are earnestly called, for God earnestly and most sincerely reveals in his Word what is pleasing to him, namely, that those who are called should come to him. He also earnestly promises rest for their souls and eternal life to all who come to him and believe.

ARTICLE 9
WHY SOME WHO ARE CALLED DO NOT COME

It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the Christ offered by the gospel, nor of God, who calls through the gospel and who even confers various gifts upon them, that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted. The fault lies in themselves. Some of them do not care and do not accept the word of life. Others do indeed receive it, but they do not accept it into their hearts, and therefore, after the joy of a temporary faith has vanished, they turn away. Still others choke the seed of the word by the thorns of the cares and the pleasures of this world, and bring forth no fruit. This our Saviour teaches in the Parable of the Sower.

ARTICLE 10
WHY OTHERS WHO ARE CALLED DO COME

Others who are called by the ministry of the gospel do come and are converted. This is not to be ascribed to man. He does not distinguish himself by his free will above others who are furnished with equal or sufficient grace for faith or conversion (as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains). It is to be ascribed to God. He has chosen his own in Christ from eternity and callsthem effectually within time. He gives them faith and repentance; he delivers them from the power of darkness and transfers them to the kingdom of his Son. All this he does that they may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, and may boast not of themselves but...
of the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

\[1\] Rom 9:16; \[2\] Col 1:13; Gal 1:4; \[3\] 1 Pet 2:9; \[4\] 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17; Eph 2:8-9.

**ARTICLE 11**

**HOW GOD BRINGS ABOUT CONVERSION**

God carries out his good pleasure in the elect and works in them true conversion in the following manner. He takes care that the gospel is preached to them, and powerfully enlightens their minds by the Holy Spirit, so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God. \[1\] By the efficacious working of the same regenerating Spirit he also penetrates into the innermost recesses of man. \[2\] He opens the closed and softens the hard heart, \[3\] circumcises that which was uncircumcised, and instils new qualities into the will. \[4\] He makes the will, which was dead, alive; which was bad, good; which was unwilling, willing; and which was stubborn, obedient. \[5\] He moves and strengthens it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works. \[6\]

\[1\] Heb 6:4-5; \[2\] 1 Cor 2:10-14; \[3\] Heb 4:12; \[4\] Acts 16:14; \[5\] Deut 30:6; \[6\] Ez 11:19; 36:26; Mt 7:18.

**ARTICLE 12**

**REGENERATION IS THE WORK OF GOD ALONE**

This conversion is the regeneration, the new creation, the raising from the dead, the making alive, \[1\] so highly spoken of in the Scriptures, which God works in us without us. But this regeneration is by no means brought about only by outward teaching, by moral persuasion, or by such a mode of operation that, after God has done his part, it remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not regenerated, converted or not converted. It is, however, clearly a supernatural, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, marvellous, mysterious, and inexpressible work. According to Scripture, inspired by the Author of this work, regeneration is not inferior in power to creation or the raising of the dead. \[2\] Hence all those in whose hearts God works in this amazing way are certainly, unfailingly, and effectually regenerated and do actually believe. \[3\] And then the will so renewed is not only acted upon and moved by God but, acted upon by God, the will itself also acts. Therefore man himself is rightly said to believe and repent through the grace he has received.

\[1\] Jn 3:3; 2 Cor 4:6; 5:17; Eph 5:14; \[2\] Jn 5:25; Rom 4:17; \[3\] Phil 2:13.

**ARTICLE 13**

**REGENERATION IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE**

In this life believers cannot fully understand the way in which God does this work. Meanwhile, however, it is enough for them to know and experience that by this grace of God they believe with the heart and love their Saviour. \[1\]

\[1\] Jn 3:18; Rom 10:9.

**ARTICLE 14**

**HOW FAITH IS A GIFT OF GOD**

Faith is therefore a gift of God, \[1\] not because it is merely offered by God to the free will of man, but because it is actually conferred on man, instilled and infused into him. Nor is it a gift in the sense that God confers only the power to believe and then awaits from man’s free will the consent to believe or the act of believing. It is, however, a gift in the sense that he who works both to will and to work, \[2\] and indeed all things in all, brings about in man both the will to believe and the act of believing.

\[1\] Eph 2:8; \[2\] Phil 2:13.
ARTICLE 15
THE PROPER ATTITUDE WITH RESPECT TO GOD’S UNDESERVED GRACE

This grace God owes to no one. For what could he owe to man? Who has given him first that he might be repaid? What could God owe to one who has nothing of his own but sin and falsehood? He, therefore, who receives this grace owes and renders eternal thanks to God alone. He who does not receive this grace, however, either does not care at all for these spiritual things and is pleased with what he has, or in false security vainly boasts that he has what he does not have. Further, about those who outwardly profess their faith and amend their lives we are to judge and speak in the most favourable way, according to the example of the apostles, for the inner recesses of the heart are unknown to us. As for those who have not yet been called, we should pray for them to God, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. But we must by no means act haughtily, as if we had distinguished ourselves from them.

1 Rom 11:35; 2 Amos 6:1; Jer 7:4; 3 Rom 14:10; 4 Rom 4:17; 5 1 Cor 4:7.

ARTICLE 16
MAN’S WILL NOT TAKEN AWAY BUT MADE ALIVE

Man through his fall did not cease to be man, endowed with intellect and will; and sin, which has pervaded the whole human race, did not deprive man of his human nature, but brought upon him depravity and spiritual death. So also this divine grace of regeneration does not act upon men as if they were blocks and stones and does not take away the will and its properties, or violently coerce it, but makes the will spiritually alive, heals it, corrects it, pleasantly and at the same time powerfully bends it. As a result, where formerly the rebellion and resistance of the flesh fully dominated, now a prompt and sincere obedience of the Spirit begins to prevail, in which the true, spiritual renewal and freedom of our will consists. And if the wonderful Maker of all good did not deal with us in this way, man would have no hope of rising from his fall through his free will, by which he, when he was still standing, plunged himself into ruin.

1 Rom 8:2; Eph 2:1; 2 Ps 51:12; Phil 2:13.

ARTICLE 17
THE USE OF MEANS

The almighty working of God whereby he brings forth and sustains this our natural life does not exclude but requires the use of means, by which he according to his infinite wisdom and goodness has willed to exercise his power. So also the aforementioned supernatural working of God whereby he regenerates us, in no way excludes or cancels the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul. For this reason the apostles and the teachers who succeeded them, reverently instructed the people concerning this grace of God, to his glory and to the abasement of all pride. In the meantime, however, they did not neglect to keep them, by the holy admonitions of the gospel, under the administration of the Word, the sacraments, and discipline. So today those who give or receive instruction in the church should not dare to tempt God by separating what he in his good pleasure has willed to be closely joined together. For grace is conferred through admonitions, and the more readily we do our duty, the more this favour of God, who works in us, usually manifests itself in its lustre, and so his work best proceeds. To God alone, both for the means and for their saving fruit and efficacy, all glory is due throughout eternity.

1 Is 55:10-11; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Jas 1:18; 3 1 Pet 1:23, 25; 2:2; 4 Acts 2:42; 2 Cor 5:11-21; 2 Tim 4:2; 5 Rom 10:14-17; 6 Jude 24, 25.
REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the corruption of man and his conversion to God, Synod rejects the following errors:

1

Error: Properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin as such is sufficient to condemn the whole human race or to deserve temporal and eternal punishment.

Refutation: This contradicts the words of the apostle when he declares: Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned (Rom 5:12). And: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation (Rom 5:16). Also: For the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23).

2

Error: The spiritual gifts or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, cannot have belonged to the will of man when he was first created, and therefore cannot have been separated from his will when he fell.

Refutation: This error is contrary to the description of the image of God which the apostle gives,¹ when he connects it with righteousness and holiness, which undoubtedly belong to the will.

3

Error: In spiritual death the spiritual gifts are not separate from the will of man, since the will as such has never been corrupted but only hampered by the darkness of the mind and the unruliness of the passions. If these hindrances have been removed, the will can exert its full innate power. The will is of itself able to will and to choose, or else not to will and not to choose, all manner of good which may be presented to it.

4

Error: The unregenerate man is not really or totally dead in sins, or deprived of all powers unto spiritual good. He can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit which is pleasing to God.

Refutation: These things are in conflict with the clear testimonies of Scripture: You were dead in your transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1), (cf. 2:5). And every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time, (Gen 6:5 and 8:21). Moreover, only the regenerate and those who are called blessed hunger and thirst after deliverance from misery and after life, and offer to God the sacrifice of a broken spirit.¹

5

Error: The corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (which for the Arminians is the light of nature), or the gifts still left him after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, that is, the evangelical or saving grace, and salvation itself. In this way God on his part shows himself ready to reveal Christ to all men, since he administers to all sufficiently and efficaciously the means necessary for the knowledge of Christ, for faith and repentance.

Refutation: Not only the experience of all ages but also Scripture testifies that this is untrue. He has revealed his word to
Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel. He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws (Ps 147:19, 20). In the past, he let all nations go their own way (Acts 14:16). And Paul and his companions were kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to (Acts 16:6, 7).

6

Error: In the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will. Therefore faith, through which we are first converted and because of which we are called believers, is not a quality or gift infused by God but only an act of man. It cannot be called a gift except with respect to the power to attain to this faith.

Refutation: This teaching contradicts the Holy Scriptures, which declare that God infuses new qualities of faith, of obedience, and of the consciousness of his love into our hearts: I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts (Jer 31:33). And: I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground (Is 44:3). And: God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us (Rom 5:5). This also conflicts with the constant practice of the church, which prays by the mouth of the prophet: Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God (Jer 31:18).

7

Error: The grace whereby we are converted to God is only a gentle advising. This manner of working which consists in advising is the most noble manner in the conversion of man and is most in harmony with man’s nature. There is no reason why this advising grace alone should not be sufficient to make the natural man spiritual. Indeed, God does not bring about the consent of the will except through this moral persuasion. The power of the divine working surpasses the working of Satan, in that God promises eternal while Satan promises only temporal goods.

Refutation: This is entirely Pelagian and contrary to the whole Scripture, which teaches beyond this moral persuasion yet another, far more powerful and divine manner of the working of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of man: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (Ezek 36:26).

8

Error: In regenerating man God does not use the powers of his omnipotence so as to forcefully and unfailingly bend man’s will to faith and conversion. Even if all the works of grace have been accomplished which God employs to convert man and even if God intends his regeneration and wills to regenerate him, man may yet so resist God and the Holy Spirit, and indeed often does so resist, that he entirely prevents his regeneration. It therefore remains in man’s power to be regenerated or not.

Refutation: This is nothing less than the denial of all the efficacy of God’s grace in our conversion, and the subjecting of the working of Almighty God to the will of man. It is contrary to the apostles, who teach his incomparably great power for us who believe (Eph 1:19); who pray our God that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith (2 Thess 1:11), and who declare that his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet 1:3).
ARTICLE 1
THE REGENERATE NOT FREE FROM INDWELLING SIN

Those whom God according to his purpose calls into the fellowship of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and regenerates by his Holy Spirit, he certainly sets free from the dominion and slavery of sin, but not entirely in this life from the flesh and the body of sin.

1 Jn 8:34; Rom 6:17; 2 Rom 7:21-24.

ARTICLE 2
DAILY SINS OF WEAKNESS

Therefore daily sins of weakness spring up and defects cling to even the best works of the saints. These are for them a constant reason to humble themselves before God, to flee to the crucified Christ, to put the flesh to death more and more through the Spirit of prayer and by holy exercises of godliness, and to long and strive for the goal of perfection until at last, delivered from this body of death, they reign with the Lamb of God in heaven.

1 Jn 8:34; Rom 6:17; 2 Rom 7:21-24.

ARTICLE 3
GOD PRESERVES HIS OWN

Because of these remnants of indwelling sin and also because of the temptations of the world and of Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in that grace if left to their own strength. But God is faithful, who mercifully confirms them in the grace once conferred upon them and powerfully preserves them in that grace to the end.

1 Rom 7:20; 2 1 Cor 10:13; 1 Pet 1:5.

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Although the power of God whereby he confirms and preserves true believers in grace is so great that it cannot be conquered by the flesh, yet the converted are not always so led and moved by God that they cannot in certain particular actions turn aside through their own fault from the guidance of grace and be seduced by and yield to the lusts of the flesh. They must therefore constantly watch and pray that they may not be led into temptation. When they do not watch and pray, they not only can be drawn away by the flesh, the world, and Satan into serious and atrocious sins, but with the righteous permission of God are sometimes actually drawn away. The lamentable fall of David, Peter, and other saints, described in Holy Scripture, demonstrates this.

1 Eph 1:19; 2 Mt 26:41; 3 1 Thess 5:6, 17; 4 Sam 11; Mt 26.
ARTICLE 5
THE EFFECTS OF SUCH SERIOUS SINS

By such gross sins, however, they greatly offend God, incur the guilt of death, grieve the Holy Spirit, suspend the exercise of faith, severely wound their consciences, and sometimes for a while lose the sense of God’s favour — until they return to the right way through sincere repentance and God’s fatherly face again shines upon them. 1

1 2 Sam 12; Eph 4:30; 2 Ps 32:3-5; Num 6:25.

ARTICLE 6
GOD WILL NOT PERMIT HIS ELECT TO BE LOST

For God, who is rich in mercy, according to the unchangeable purpose of his election, does not completely withdraw his Holy Spirit from his own even in their deplorable fall. Neither does he permit them to sink so deep that they fall away from the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin unto death or the sin against the Holy Spirit and, totally deserted by him, plunge themselves into eternal ruin.

1 Eph 1:11; 2 Eph 2:4; Ps 51:13; 3 Gal 4:5; 4 1 Jn 5:16-18; 5 Mt 12:31-32.

ARTICLE 7
GOD WILL AGAIN RENEW HIS ELECT TO REPENTANCE

For in the first place, in their fall, he preserves in them his imperishable seed of regeneration, so that it does not perish and is not cast out. Further, through his Word and Spirit he certainly and effectually renews them to repentance. As a result they grieve from the heart with a godly sorrow for the sins they have committed; they seek and obtain through faith with a contrite heart forgiveness in the blood of the Mediator; they again experience the favour of a reconciled God and adore his mercies and faithfulness. And from now on they more diligently work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

1 1 Pet 1:23; 2 1 Jn 3:9; 3 2 Cor 7:10; 4 Ps 32:5; 51:19; 5 Phil 2:12.

ARTICLE 8
THE GRACE OF THE TRIUNE GOD PRESERVES

So it is not through their own merits or strength but through the undeserved mercy of God that they neither totally fall away from faith and grace nor remain in their downfall and are finally lost. With respect to themselves this could not only easily happen but would undoubtedly happen. But with respect to God this cannot possibly happen, since his counsel cannot be changed, his promise cannot fail, the calling according to his purpose cannot be revoked, the merit, intercession, and preservation of Christ cannot be nullified, and the sealing of the Holy Spirit can neither be frustrated nor destroyed.

1 Ps 33:11; 2 Heb 6:17; Rom 8:30,34; 9:11; 3 Lk 22:32; 4 Eph 1:13.

ARTICLE 9
THE ASSURANCE OF THIS PRESERVATION

Believers themselves can be certain of this preservation of the elect to salvation and the perseverance of true believers in the faith. And they are indeed certain according to the measure of their faith, by which they firmly believe that they are and always shall remain true and living members of the church, and that they have forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

1 Rom 8:31-39; 2 Tim 4:8; 3 2 Tim 4:18.

ARTICLE 10
THE SOURCE OF THIS ASSURANCE

This assurance is not produced by a certain private revelation besides or outside the Word, but by faith in the promises
of God, which he has most abundantly revealed in his Word for our comfort; by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with our spirit that we are children and heirs of God; and, finally, by the serious and holy pursuit of a clear conscience and of good works. And if the elect of God did not have in this world the solid comfort of obtaining the victory and this unfailing pledge of eternal glory, they would be of all men the most miserable.

1 Rom 8:16-17; 1 Jn 3:1-2; 2 Acts 24:16; 3 Rom 8:37; 4 1 Cor 15:19.

ARTICLE 11
THIS ASSURANCE NOT ALWAYS FELT

Scripture meanwhile testifies that believers in this life have to struggle with various doubts of the flesh and, placed under severe temptation, do not always feel this full assurance of faith and certainty of perseverance. But God, the Father of all comfort, will not let them be tempted beyond their strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, and by the Holy Spirit will again revive in them the certainty of perseverance.

1 2 Cor 1:3; 2 1 Cor 10:13.

ARTICLE 12
THIS ASSURANCE IS AN INCENTIVE TO GODLINESS

This certainty of perseverance, however, so far from making true believers proud and complacent, is rather the true root of humility, childlike reverence, genuine godliness, endurance in every struggle, fervent prayers, constancy in suffering and in the confession of the truth, and lasting joy in God. Further, the consideration of this benefit is for them an incentive to the serious and constant practice of gratitude and good works, as is evident from the testimonies of Scripture and the examples of the saints.

1 Rom 12:1; 2 Ps 56:12-13; 3 Ps 116:12; Tit 2:11-14; 1 Jn 3:3.

ARTICLE 13
THIS ASSURANCE DOES NOT LEAD TO CARELESSNESS

Neither does this renewed confidence produce carelessness or neglect of godliness in those who have been restored after their fall; rather, it produces in them a much greater concern to observe carefully the ways of the Lord, which he prepared beforehand. They observe these ways in order that by walking in them they may retain the certainty of their perseverance. Then shall the face of their gracious God not turn away from them again because of their abuse of his fatherly goodness, with the result that they would fall into still greater anguish of spirit. Indeed, to those who fear God the contemplation of his face is sweeter than life, but its withdrawal is more bitter than death.

1 2 Cor 7:10; 2 Eph 2:10; 3 Ps 63:4; Is 64:7; 4 Jer 33:5.

ARTICLE 14
THE USE OF MEANS IN PERSEVERANCE

Just as it has pleased God to begin this work of grace in us by the preaching of the gospel, so he maintains, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation on it, by its exhortations, threats, and promises, and by the use of the sacraments.


ARTICLE 15
THIS DOCTRINE IS HATED BY SATAN BUT LOVED BY THE CHURCH

This doctrine of the perseverance of true believers and saints, and of their assurance of it, God has most abundantly revealed in his Word for the glory of his name and for the consolation of the godly, and he impresses it on the hearts of believers. It is something which the flesh does not understand, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the
ignoret and the hypocrites abuse, and the heretics attack. The Bride of Christ, on the other hand, has always loved this doctrine most tenderly and defended it steadfastly as a treasure of inestimable value; and God, against whom no counsel can avail and no strength can prevail, shall see to it that she will continue to do so. To this God alone, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. Amen.

1 Rev 14:12; 2 Eph 5:32; 3 Ps 33:10-11; 4 1 Pet 5:10-11.

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Having explained the true doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, Synod rejects the following errors:

1 Error: The perseverance of the true believers is not a fruit of election or a gift of God obtained by the death of Christ, but a condition of the new covenant, which man before his so-called decisive election and justification must fulfil through his free will.

Refutation: Holy Scripture testifies that perseverance follows from election and is given to the elect by virtue of the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ: The elect obtained it. The others were hardened (Rom 11:7). Also: He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8:32-35).

2 Error: God does indeed provide the believer with sufficient strength to persevere, and is ready to preserve this in him if he will do his duty. But even with all those things in place which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God will use to preserve faith, it still always depends on the decision of man’s will whether he will persevere or not.

Refutation: This idea contains outright Pelagianism. While it wants to make men free, it makes them robbers of God’s honour. It conflicts with the consistent teaching of the gospel, which takes from man all cause for boasting, and ascribes all the praise for this benefit to the grace of God alone. It is also contrary to the testimony of the apostle: It is God who will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, (1 Cor 1:8).

3 Error: True regenerate believers not only can fall completely and definitely from justifying faith and also from grace and salvation, but indeed they often do fall from them and are lost forever.

Refutation: This opinion nullifies the grace of justification and regeneration and the continuous preservation by Christ, contrary to the clear words of the apostle Paul: God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! (Rom 5:8, 9). And contrary to the apostle John: No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God (1 Jn 3:9), and also to the words of Jesus Christ: I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand (Jn 10:28, 29).
4

Error: True regenerate believers can commit the sin that leads to death or the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Refutation: The same apostle John, after speaking of those who commit the sin that leads to death and forbidding prayer for them, immediately adds: We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin (namely, with that kind of sin); the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him (1 Jn 5:16-17).

5

Error: Without a special revelation we can have no certainty of future perseverance in this life.

Refutation: By this doctrine the sure comfort of true believers in this life is taken away, and the doubting of the followers of the pope is again introduced into the church. The Holy Scriptures, however, always deduce this assurance, not from a special and extraordinary revelation, but from the marks peculiar to the children of God and from the very constant promises of God. So especially the apostle Paul declares that nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8:39). And John writes: Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us (1 Jn 3:24).

6

Error: By its very nature the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance and salvation causes false security and is harmful to godliness, good morals, prayers, and other holy exercises. On the contrary, it is praiseworthy to doubt.

Refutation: This error ignores the effective power of God’s grace and the working of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. It contradicts the apostle John, who teaches the opposite with these clear words: Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure (1 Jn 3:2, 3). Furthermore, it is refuted by the example of the saints in both the Old and the New Testament who, although they were certain of their perseverance and salvation, nevertheless continued in prayer and other exercises of godliness.

7

Error: The faith of those who believe for a time does not differ from justifying and saving faith except with respect to its duration.

Refutation: In Matthew 13:20-23 and Luke 8:13-15 Christ himself clearly indicates, besides this duration, a threefold difference between those who believe only for a time and true believers. He declares that the former receive the seed on rocky ground, but the latter in good soil, or in a good heart; that the former are without root, but the latter have a firm root; and that the former are without fruit, but the latter bring forth fruit in varying measure, constantly and steadfastly.

8

Error: It is not absurd that one, having lost his first regeneration, is again and even often born anew.

Refutation: This doctrine denies that the seed of God, by which we are born again, is imperishable, contrary to the testimony of the apostle Peter: You have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable (1 Pet 1:23).
CHAPTER V

9

Error: Christ did not pray anywhere that believers should unfailingly continue in faith.

Refutation: This contradicts Christ himself, who says: I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail (Lk 22:32). It also contradicts the apostle John, who declares that Christ did not pray only for the apostles, but also for all who would believe through their word: Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, and, my prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one (Jn 17:11, 15), (cf. 17:20).

CONCLUSION

This is the clear, simple, and straightforward explanation of the orthodox doctrine with respect to the five articles in dispute in the Netherlands, as well as the rejection of the errors by which the churches have for some time been disturbed. The Synod judges this explanation and rejection to be taken from the Word of God and to be in agreement with the confessions of the Reformed churches. Hence it clearly appears that some have acted very improperly and against all truth, fairness, and love in wishing to persuade the public of the following:

– The doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning predestination and related subjects, by its very character and tendency, turns the hearts of men away from all godliness and religion.
– It is an opiate for the flesh administered by the devil, and a stronghold of Satan, where he lies in wait for all, wounds multitudes, and mortally pierces many with the darts both of despair and false security.
– It makes God the author of sin, an unjust tyrant and hypocrite; and is nothing more than a renewed Stoicism, Manicheism, Libertinism, and Mohammedanism.
– It leads to sinful carelessness, since it makes people believe that nothing can prevent the salvation of the elect, no matter how they live, and that, therefore, they may safely commit the most atrocious crimes. On the other hand, it would not in the least contribute to the salvation of the reprobate, even if they had performed all the works of the saints.
– The same doctrine teaches that God has predestined and created the greatest part of the world for eternal damnation by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without taking into account any sin.
– In the same manner in which election is the source and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and ungodliness.
– Many innocent children of believers are torn from their mothers’ breasts and tyrannically thrown into hell, so that neither the blood of Christ nor their baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can be of any help to them.

And there are many more teachings of this kind which the Reformed churches not only do not confess but even detest wholeheartedly.

Therefore, this Synod of Dort adjures, in the name of the Lord, all who piously call upon our Saviour Jesus Christ not to judge the faith of the Reformed churches from the slander gathered from here and there. Neither are they to judge from personal statements of some ancient or modern teachers, often quoted in bad faith, or taken out of context and explained contrary to their meaning. But one ought to judge the faith of the Reformed churches from the public confessions of these churches themselves and from the present explanation of the orthodox doctrine, confirmed by
the unanimous consent of the members of the entire Synod, one and all.

Moreover, the Synod warns the slanderers themselves to consider how severe a judgment of God awaits those who bear false witness against so many churches and their confessions, disturb the consciences of the weak, and try to make many suspicious of the community of true believers.

Finally, this Synod exhorts all fellow ministers in the gospel of Christ to conduct themselves in a God-fearing and reverent manner when they deal with this doctrine in schools and churches. In teaching it, both in speaking and writing, they ought to seek the glory of God’s name, the holiness of life, and the consolation of afflicted souls. Their thinking and speaking about this doctrine should be in agreement with Scripture according to the analogy of faith. And they must refrain from all those expressions which exceed the prescribed limits of the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures and which may provide shameless sophists with a good opportunity to scoff at the doctrine of the Reformed churches, or even to slander it.

May Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is seated at the Father’s right hand and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the slanderers of the sound doctrine, and equip the faithful ministers of his Word with the Spirit of wisdom and discretion, that everything they say may tend to the glory of God and the building up of those who hear them. Amen.
ORDERS OF WORSHIP
LITURGICAL FORMS
PRAYERS
ORDERS OF WORSHIP

The following are the orders of worship in common use:

A
For the Morning Service
1. Votum: Psalm 124:8
2. Salutation: 1 Corinthians 1:3 or Revelation 1:4, 5a
3. Congregational Singing
4. The Ten Words of the Covenant, from Exodus 20:2-17 or Deuteronomy 5:6-21
5. Congregational Singing
6. Reading of Holy Scripture (one or more passages related to the sermon, often followed by singing)
(7. Administration of Baptism)
8. Prayer (with confession of sins, prayer for forgiveness, renewal, and illumination, and intercessions)
9. Offertory
10. Congregational Singing
11. Reading of the Text
12. Ministry of the Word (often followed by responsive song)
13. Prayer of Thanksgiving
(14. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper)
15. Closing Song
16. Benediction: from Numbers 6:24-26 or 2 Corinthians 13:14
   (Sometimes the Scripture reading follows the prayer.)

For the Afternoon Service
1. Votum: Psalm 124:8
2. Salutation: Revelation 1:4, 5a or 1 Corinthians 1:3 or 1 Timothy 1:2
3. Congregational Singing
4. Profession of Faith:
   (a) the Apostles’ Creed or Nicene Creed (followed by a song, if so desired), or
   (b) the Apostles’ Creed sung by the congregation (Hymn 1A or 1B)
5. Reading of Holy Scripture (one or more passages relevant to the part of the Heidelberg Catechism to be explained, often followed by singing)
(6. Administration of Baptism)
7. Prayer (for the opening of the Word, and intercessions)
8. Offertory
9. Congregational Singing
10. Reading of the Heidelberg Catechism (the Lord’s Day to be explained)
11. Ministry of the Word (often followed by responsive song)
12. Prayer of Thanksgiving
(13. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper)
14. Closing Song
15. Benediction: from 2 Corinthians 13:14 or Numbers 6:24-26
   (Sometimes the Scripture reading follows the prayer. The Lord’s Supper is often celebrated between 4 and 5 instead.)
ORDERS OF WORSHIP

B
For the Morning Service
1. Votum: Psalm 124:8
2. Salutation: 1 Corinthians 1:3 or 1 Timothy 1:2 or Revelation 1:4, 5a
3. Congregational Singing
4. The Ten Words of the Covenant, from Exodus 20:2-17 or Deuteronomy 5:6-21
5. Congregational Singing
6. Prayer (public confession of sins; prayer for forgiveness, renewal, and illumination)
7. Reading of Holy Scripture (one or more passages related to the sermon, often followed by singing)
8. Reading of the Text
9. Ministry of the Word
10. Responsive Song
(11. Administration of Baptism)
12. Prayer (thanksgiving, and prayer for all the needs of Christendom)
13. Offertory
(14. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper)
15. Closing Song
16. Benediction: from Numbers 6:24-26 or 2 Corinthians 13:14
(Baptism is often administered between 5 and 6 instead.)

For the Afternoon Service
1. Votum: Psalm 124:8
2. Salutation: Revelation 1:4, 5a or 1 Corinthians 1:3 or 1 Timothy 1:2
3. Congregational Singing
4. Prayer (for the opening of the Word)
5. Reading of Holy Scripture (one or more passages relevant to the part of the Heidelberg Catechism to be explained)
6. Reading of the Heidelberg Catechism (the Lord’s Day to be explained)
7. Ministry of the Word (often followed by responsive song)
8. Profession of Faith:
   (a) the Apostles’ Creed or Nicene Creed (followed by a song, if so desired), or
   (b) the Apostles’ Creed sung by the congregation (Hymn 1A or 1B)
(9. Administration of Baptism)
10. Prayer (thanksgiving and intercessions)
11. Offertory
(12. Celebration of the Lord’s Supper)
13. Closing Song
(Baptism is often administered between 3 and 4 instead. Similarly the Lord’s Supper is frequently celebrated at that point.)
Doctrine of Baptism

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ: The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath, so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again. This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized into the name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that he establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for his children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.

When we are baptized into the name of the Son, God the Son promises us that he washes us in his blood from all our sins and unites us with him in his death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that he will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God’s elect in life eternal.

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust him, and to love him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God’s mercy nor continue in sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Although our children do not understand all this, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism. Just as they share without their knowledge in the condemnation of Adam, so are they, without their knowledge, received into grace in Christ. For the Lord spoke to Abraham, the father of all believers, and thus also speaks to us and our children, saying, I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you (Gen 17:7). Peter also testifies to this when he says, The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call (Acts 2:39). Therefore, in the old dispensation God commanded that infants be circumcised. This circumcision was a seal of the covenant and of the righteousness of faith. Christ also took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed

1 Eph 2:3; 2 Jn 3:3, 5; 3 Mt 28:19; 4 Rom 8:28; 5 Rom 6:5; 6 Eph 5:27; 7 Mt 22:37; 8 1 Jn 2:15; 9 Eph 4:22; 10 Col 3:5; 11 Rom 4:13; 12 Col 2:11.
them (Mk 10:16). In the new dispensation baptism has replaced circumcision.\(^\text{12}\) Therefore, infants must be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of his covenant; and as they grow up, their parents have the duty to instruct them in these things.

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to his glory, for our comfort, and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon his holy name.

Prayer before Baptism

Almighty, eternal God, in your righteous judgment you punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in your great mercy saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. You drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, but led your people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground – by which baptism was signified.

We therefore pray that you, in your infinite mercy, will graciously look upon this your child and incorporate him (her) by your Holy Spirit into your Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with him by baptism into death and raised with him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in you, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ your Son.

All this we ask through him, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Address to the Parents

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

You have heard that baptism is an ordinance of the Lord our God to seal to us and our children his covenant; we must therefore use this sacrament for that purpose and not out of custom or superstition. That it may be clear, then, that you desire baptism for the right purpose, you are to answer sincerely the following questions:

First, do you confess that our children, though conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation, are sanctified in Christ and thus as members of his church ought to be baptized?

Second, do you confess that the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Third, do you promise as father and mother to instruct your child in this doctrine, as soon as he (she) is able to understand, and to have him (her) instructed therein to the utmost of your power?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do (to be answered by each parent).

Baptism

__________, I baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise you that you have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of your beloved Son Jesus Christ. You received us through your Holy Spirit as members of your only-begotten Son, and so adopted us to be your children. You sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We pray through your beloved Son
that you will always govern this child by your Holy Spirit, that he (she) may be nurtured in the Christian faith and in godliness, and may grow and increase in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that he (she) thus may acknowledge your fatherly goodness and mercy, which you have shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise and magnify you and your Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

(Those who were not baptized in their infancy, and at a later age declare that they desire Christian baptism, must first be thoroughly instructed in the essentials of the Christian doctrine. After having confessed this doctrine before the overseers, they shall be admitted to the public profession of their faith and to baptism. For the administration of their baptism the following form shall be used.)

Doctrine of Baptism

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath,¹ so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again.² This is what the immersion in or sprinkling with water teaches us. It signifies the impurity of our souls, so that we may detest ourselves, humble ourselves before God, and seek our cleansing and salvation outside of ourselves.

Second, baptism signifies and seals to us that he establishes an eternal covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for his children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good and avert all evil or turn it to our benefit.³ When we are baptized into the name of the Son, God the Son promises us that he washes us in his blood from all our sins and unites us with him in his death and resurrection.⁴ Thus we are freed from our sins and accounted righteous before God.

When we are baptized into the name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that he will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God’s elect in life eternal.

Third, since every covenant contains two parts, a promise and an obligation, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to trust in him, and to love him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and with all our strength.⁵ We must not love the world⁶ but put off our old nature⁷ and lead a God-fearing life.⁸ And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we must not despair of God’s mercy nor continue in

¹ Eph 2:3; ² Jn 3:3, 5; ³ Mt 28:19; ⁴ Rom 8:28; ⁵ Rom 6:5; ⁶ Eph 5:27; ⁷ Mt 22:37; ⁸ 1 Jn 2:15; ⁹ Eph 4:22; ¹⁰ Col 3:5.
sin, for baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Although the children of believers are not able to understand these things, they must be baptized by virtue of the covenant. Adults, however, may not be baptized unless they, conscious of their sins, repent and profess their faith in Christ. For this reason John the Baptist, following the command of God, preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3), and only those who confessed their sins were baptized. Our Lord Jesus Christ also commanded his apostles to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19), adding the promise, whoever believes and is baptized will be saved (Mk 16:16).

According to this rule the apostles baptized only those adults who had repented and professed their faith. Therefore also today no other adults should be baptized than those who have learned to understand, by the preaching and instruction of the Gospel, the glorious contents of holy baptism, and are thus able to give account of their faith by personal profession.

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to his glory, for our comfort, and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon his holy name.

Prayer before Baptism

Almighty, eternal God, in your righteous judgment you punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in your great mercy saved and protected the believer Noah and his family. You drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea, but led your people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground – by which baptism was signified.

We therefore pray that you, in your infinite mercy, will graciously look upon this brother (sister) and incorporate him (her) by your Holy Spirit into your Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) may be buried with him by baptism into death and raised with him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her) cross and cleave to him in true faith, firm hope, and ardent love. Grant that he (she), comforted in you, may leave this life, which is no more than a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ your Son.

All this we ask through him, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Public Profession of Faith

Beloved brother (sister) __________., you desire to receive holy baptism as a seal of your incorporation into the church of God. You have been instructed by us in the Christian religion and have made profession of it before the overseers. It must become clear to all that you not only accept the Christian doctrine, but also intend, by the grace of God, to live according to it. Therefore, we ask you to answer sincerely the following questions before God and his church:

First, do you believe in the one and only true God, distinct in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who has created of nothing heaven and earth, with all that is in them, and still upholds and governs them, so that nothing happens without his divine will?

\[\text{footnotes:} 11 \text{Mk 1:5; } 12 \text{Acts 2:38, 8:36, 37, 10:47, 48, 16:14, 15, 16:31, 33.}\]
Second, do you believe that you were conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature a child of wrath, totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil? Do you confess that you have often transgressed the commandments of the Lord in thought, word, and deed, and do you sincerely repent of these your sins?

Third, do you believe that Jesus Christ, who is both true and eternal God and true man, who assumed his human nature from the virgin Mary, is given by God as your Saviour? Believing in him, do you confess that you receive the remission of sins in his blood and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and his church?

Fourth, do you wholeheartedly agree with the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church? Do you promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine to the end of your life, and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with this doctrine? Do you promise to persevere in the fellowship of this Christian church and be diligent in the hearing of the Word of God and in the use of the holy sacraments?

Fifth, do you firmly resolve, as is proper for a member of Christ and his church, always to lead a Christian life and not to love the world and its evil desires? Do you promise to submit willingly to the Christian admonition and discipline of the church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct?

__________, what is your answer?

**Answer**

I do.

Our merciful God grant you his grace and blessing to fulfil this your holy intention through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Baptism**

__________, I baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise you that you have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of your beloved Son Jesus Christ. You received us through your Holy Spirit as members of your only-begotten Son, and so adopted us to be your children. You sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We pray through your beloved Son that you will always govern this brother (sister) by your Holy Spirit, that he (she) may live a truly Christian and godly life and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that he (she) may acknowledge your fatherly goodness and mercy, which you have shown to him (her) and to us all. May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King, and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil, and his whole dominion. May he (she) forever praise and magnify you and your Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, the one only true God. Amen.
FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

Address

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

We thank the Lord our God for the grace given us by adopting us to be his children and receiving us into his covenant. We acknowledge his love and power, by which he instills in his children the desire publicly to profess their faith in him in the presence of his holy church, so that they may receive admission to the holy supper.

Profession

Since you have now come here to make this profession before God and his holy church, and hereby to receive admission to the holy supper, we ask you to answer sincerely to the following questions:

First, do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church? Do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in this doctrine in life and death, rejecting all heresies and errors conflicting with God’s Word?

Second, do you acknowledge God’s covenant promises, which have been signified and sealed to you in your baptism? Do you truly detest and humble yourself before God because of your sins and seek your life outside of yourself in Jesus Christ?

Third, do you declare that you love the Lord God and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve him according to his Word, to forsake the world, and to crucify your old nature?

Fourth, do you firmly resolve to commit your whole life to the Lord’s service as a living member of his church? Do you promise to submit willingly to the admonition and discipline of the church, if it should happen, and may God graciously prevent it, that you become delinquent either in doctrine or in conduct?

__________, what is your answer?

Answer

I do.

The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen (1 Pet 5:10, 11).

FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Institution

Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The holy supper has been instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to the words of this institution as described by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29: For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of
the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

In order that we may now celebrate this holy supper of the Lord to our comfort, we must first rightly examine ourselves. Further, we must use it as Christ intended it, namely, to his remembrance.

**Self-examination**

True self-examination consists of the following three parts:

First, let everyone consider his sins and accursedness, so that he, detesting himself, may humble himself before God. For the wrath of God against sin is so great that he could not leave it unpunished, but has punished it in his beloved Son Jesus Christ by the bitter and shameful death on the cross.

Second, let everyone search his heart whether he also believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own, as if he himself had fulfilled all righteousness.

Third, let everyone examine his conscience whether it is his sincere desire to show true thankfulness to God with his entire life and, laying aside all enmity, hatred, and envy, to live with his neighbour in true love and unity.

**Invitation and Admonition**

God will certainly receive in grace all who are thus minded and count them worthy to partake of the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But those who do not feel this testimony in their hearts, eat and drink judgment upon themselves. Therefore, according to the command of Christ and of the apostle Paul, we admonish all those who know themselves to be guilty of the following offensive sins to abstain from the table of the Lord, and we declare to them that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ: all who refuse to trust in the Lord alone or who serve him in their own manner; all who abuse the name of the Lord by cursing or in any other way; all who do not diligently attend the worship services and who despise the proclamation of God’s Word or the sanctity of the sacraments; all who are disobedient to their parents or to others in authority over them; all who violate human life or cherish hatred against their neighbour and refuse to be reconciled to him; all who, either within or outside of holy wedlock, do not keep their bodies pure; all who by stealing, greed, or extravagance, lead a worldly life; all liars, backbiters, and slanderers; briefly, all who either in word or conduct show themselves to be unbelieving by leading an offensive life. While they persist in their sins, they shall not take of this food, which Christ has ordained only for his believers; otherwise their judgment and condemnation will be the heavier.

But all this, beloved brothers and sisters, is not meant to discourage broken and contrite hearts, as if only those who are without sin may come to the table of the Lord. For we do not come to this supper to declare that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves. On the contrary, we seek our life outside of ourselves in Jesus Christ and, in doing so, we acknowledge that we are dead in ourselves. We also are aware of our many sins and shortcomings. We do not have perfect faith and we do not serve God with such zeal as he requires. Daily we have to contend with the weakness of our faith and with

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1 Cor 6:9, 10; 2 Ps 51:17.
the evil desires of our flesh. Yet, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are heartily sorry for these shortcomings and desire to fight against our unbelief and to live according to all the commandments of God. Therefore we may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in us against our will can prevent us from being received by God in grace and from being made worthy partakers of this heavenly food and drink.

Remembrance of Christ

Let us now consider for what purpose the Lord has instituted his supper; namely, that we should use it in remembrance of him. We are to remember him in the following manner:

First of all, let us fully trust that the Lord Jesus Christ was sent by the Father into this world, according to the promises made from the beginning to the fathers in the Old Testament, and that he assumed our flesh and blood.

From the beginning of his incarnation to the end of his life on earth, he bore for us the wrath of God, under which we should have perished eternally. By his perfect obedience he has for us fulfilled all the righteousness of God’s law. We remember in particular that the weight of the wrath of God caused by our sins pressed out of him sweat like drops of blood falling on the ground in the garden of Gethsemane. There he was bound that he might free us from our sins. He suffered countless insults that we might never be put to shame. Though innocent he was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He even let his blessed body be nailed to the cross that he might cancel the bond which stood against us because of our sins. By all this he has taken our curse upon himself that he might fill us with his blessing. On the cross he humbled himself, in body and soul, to the very deepest shame and anguish of hell. Then he called out with a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Mt 27:46) that we might be accepted by God and nevermore be forsaken by him. Finally, by his death and the shedding of his blood, he confirmed the new and eternal testament, the covenant of grace, when he said, It is finished (Jn 19:30).

Assurance

In order that we might firmly believe that we belong to this covenant of grace, the Lord Jesus Christ during his last Passover instituted the holy supper. He gave the bread and the cup to his disciples in remembrance of him, and he declared, saying: As often as you eat this bread and drink from this cup, you are reminded and assured of my hearty love and faithfulness towards you. It is a sure pledge that I have given my body and shed my blood for you; otherwise you would have suffered eternal death. I nourish and refresh your hungry and thirsty souls with my crucified body and shed blood to everlasting life as certainly as this bread is broken before your eyes and this cup is given to you and you eat and drink in remembrance of me.

From this institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ we learn that he directs our faith and trust to his perfect sacrifice, once offered on the cross. It is the only ground for our salvation. Thereby he has become to our hungry and thirsty souls the true food and drink of life eternal. For by his death he has removed the cause of our eternal hunger and misery, which is sin, and obtained for us the life-giving Spirit. By this Spirit, who dwells in Christ as the Head and in us as his members, we have true communion with him and share in all his riches, life eternal, righteousness, and glory.

**Fellowship**

By the same Spirit we are also united in true brotherly love as members of one body. For the apostle Paul says, *Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf* (1 Cor 10:17). As one bread is baked out of many grains and one wine is pressed out of many grapes, so we all, incorporated in Christ by faith, are together one body. For the sake of Christ, who so exceedingly loved us first, we shall now love one another, and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

**Expectation of Christ's Coming**

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until he comes. We receive at his table a foretaste of the abundant joy which he has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when he will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of his Father. Let us rejoice and give him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming! May the almighty, heavenly God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ help us in this through his Holy Spirit. Amen.

To receive all this, let us now humble ourselves before God in prayer and call upon him in true faith.

**Prayer**

Merciful God and Father, we thank you that in this supper we cherish the blessed memory of the bitter death of your dear Son Jesus Christ. Work in our hearts through the Holy Spirit so that we may entrust ourselves more and more to your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that our contrite hearts may be nourished with his true body and blood, yes, with him who is the only heavenly bread, that we may not live in our sins, but Christ in us and we in him.

Let us so truly be partakers of the new and everlasting testament, the covenant of grace, that we do not doubt that you will forever be our gracious Father, nevermore imputing to us our sins but providing us with all things for body and soul as your dear children and heirs.

Grant us your grace that we may take up our cross joyfully, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour. Let us in all tribulation await our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come from heaven to change our mortal body to be like his glorious body and take us to himself forever.

Hear us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Or:... through Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,)

*Our Father in heaven,*
*hallowed be your name,*
*your kingdom come,*
*your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*
*Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,*
*for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*

Amen)

**Profession of Faith**

Let us now profess our catholic, undoubted Christian faith. (The Apostles’ Creed may be recited by the minister, said in unison, or sung by the congregation.)

**Exhortation**

Brothers and sisters, in order that we may now be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, we must not cling with our hearts to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift our hearts on high in heaven, where Christ, our advocate, is, at the right hand of his heavenly Father. Let us not doubt that we shall be nourished
and refreshed in our souls with his body and blood, through the working of the Holy Spirit, as truly as we receive the holy bread and drink in remembrance of him.

Communion

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)
The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)
The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a Psalm or hymn be sung.)

Doxology

(After the communion, the minister shall say:)
Beloved in the Lord, since the Lord has now nourished our souls at his table, let us together praise his holy name. Let everyone say in his heart:

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion (Ps 103:1-4).

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him (Ps 103:8-13).

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? (Rom 8:32)

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! (Rom 5:8-10)

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord, from now on and for evermore. Amen.

Thanksgiving

Merciful God and Father, we thank you that in your boundless mercy you have given us your only-begotten Son as our Mediator. We praise you that he is the sacrifice for our sins and our food and drink to life eternal.

We thank you that you give us a true faith, through which we may share in such great benefits.

Through your Son you have instituted the holy supper for the strengthening of our faith. We earnestly ask you, faithful God and Father, that by your Holy Spirit this celebration may lead to our daily increase in true faith and fellowship with Christ, your beloved Son.

In his name we pray. Amen.

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12 Rom 8:34
Institution

Brothers and sisters:

The apostle Paul describes the institution of the holy supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-29: For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.

Self-examination

If we are to celebrate the holy supper for the strengthening of our faith, we must first examine ourselves.

Let everyone consider his sins and accursedness that he may humble himself before God.

Let everyone examine his heart whether he believes the sure promise of God that all his sins are forgiven him only for the sake of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely given him as his own.

Finally, let everyone determine whether he intends gratefully to serve the Lord with his entire life and to live in true love and harmony with his neighbour.

Invitation and Admonition

All who by the grace of God repent of their sins, desire to fight against their unbelief and live according to God’s commandments, will certainly be received by God at the table of his Son Jesus Christ. They may be fully assured that no sin or weakness which still remains in them against their will shall keep God from accepting them in grace and granting them this heavenly food and drink.

But to all who do not truly grieve over their sins and do not repent from them, we declare that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ. We admonish them to abstain from the holy supper; otherwise their judgment will be the heavier.

Remembrance of Christ

Christ has commanded us to use this supper in remembrance of him. At this table we remember that our Lord was sent by the Father into the world, assumed our flesh and blood, and from the beginning to the end of his life bore for us the wrath of God. He was bound that we might be set free. Though innocent he was condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. He let his blessed body be nailed to the cross and so took our curse upon himself to fill us with his blessing. He was forsaken by God that we might nevermore be forsaken by him. By his death and the shedding of his blood he confirmed the new and everlasting covenant of grace when he said, It is finished (Jn 19:30).

Assurance

Therefore, as often as we eat this bread and drink of this cup, we are reminded and assured of Christ’s hearty
love towards us. He died on the cross and shed his blood for us that he might feed our hungry and thirsty souls unto eternal life with his crucified body and shed blood, as truly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of him.

Fellowship

By his suffering and death Christ has obtained for us the Spirit of life. By this Spirit we are united with him and receive all his gifts. The same Spirit unites us in brotherly love as members of one body. Therefore we all, incorporated into Christ by true faith, are one body and shall show this to one another not just in words but also in deeds.

Expectation of Christ’s Coming

Finally, Christ has commanded us to celebrate the holy supper until he comes. We receive at his table a foretaste of the abundant joy which he has promised and look forward to the marriage feast of the Lamb, when he will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of his Father.

Let us rejoice and give him the glory, for the marriage feast of the Lamb is coming! Let us pray.

Prayer

Gracious God and Father, we thank you that you have given us your only Son as a sacrifice for our sins and as our food and drink unto eternal life.

We pray, work in our hearts by your Holy Spirit through this supper so that, entrusting ourselves more and more to your Son Jesus Christ, we may not live in our sins, but he in us and we in him. Strengthen our faith that you will forever be our gracious Father, who gives us all things necessary for body and soul. Grant us your grace that we may joyfully take up our cross, deny ourselves, and confess our Saviour.

Teach us to expect our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, who will change our mortal body to be like his glorious body and take us to himself in eternity. Amen.

Exhortation

In order to be nourished with Christ, the true heavenly bread, let us not cling to the outward symbols of bread and wine, but lift up our hearts to Jesus Christ, our advocate at the Father’s right hand.

Let us firmly believe that we will be nourished with his body and blood as certainly as we receive this bread and drink in remembrance of him.

Communion

(When he breaks the bread, the minister shall say:)

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was broken for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(And when he gives the cup:)

The cup of blessing, for which we give thanks, is the communion of the blood of Christ. Take, drink from it, all of you, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was poured out for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

(During the communion some suitable portion of Scripture may be read and a Psalm or hymn be sung.)

Doxology

(After the communion, the minister shall say:)

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1 1 Cor 10:17; 2 Rev 19:7.
Beloved in the Lord, now that the Lord has nourished us at his table, let us together praise his name with thanksgiving.

Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion (Ps 103:1-4).

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him (Ps 103:8-14).

Therefore my heart and my mouth shall proclaim the praise of the Lord, from now on and for evermore. Amen.

Thanksgiving

Merciful God and Father, we thank you for the opportunity to partake of the supper of your Son Jesus Christ, by eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, and so proclaiming the death of our Lord as the only ground of our salvation.

We praise you that you give us the privilege to rejoice in the communion of your Son, as well as in the fellowship with one another.

We also earnestly ask you that we, being strengthened in faith by the celebration of this sacrament, may bring forth fruits of thankfulness.

Cause us to show in our whole life our heartfelt love towards you and towards each other.

Grant that with ardent expectation we may await the return of our Saviour, who promised that he would drink with us of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of his Father.

To you, Father, be all glory, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF NON-COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

First Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:
The consistory has the sad duty of informing the congregation that a brother (sister), by baptism incorporated into the Christian church, is guilty of sin against the... commandment and that he (she), in spite of many earnest admonitions, did not show evidence of true repentance. Therefore the consistory, to its great sorrow, is obliged to deal further with this brother (sister), and, if he (she) persists in his (her) sin, to proceed to his (her) excommunication. The consistory is making this known to you for the first time and seriously exhorts you to pray for him (her) continually, that it might please the Lord to bring him (her) to repentance.

Second Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:
The consistory, having taken the advice of classis, has the sad duty of informing the congregation that __________, by baptism incorporated into the Christian church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persists in sinning against the... commandment. Unless he (she) within... shows repentance and amendment of life,
the consistory will be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the church because of his (her) wilful disobedience to the covenant of God. The congregation is exhorted to admonish this member with affection and to pray the Lord for his (her) conversion.

The Excommunication

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory previously had the sad duty of informing the congregation that __________, by baptism incorporated into the Christian church, in spite of continual earnest admonitions, obstinately persisted in sinning against the... commandment, and that the consistory would be obliged to exclude this brother (sister) from the communion of the church, unless he (she) showed repentance and amendment of life.

The consistory must now inform the congregation that __________, in spite of many earnest admonitions, obstinately denies the communion with Christ and his church, which was signified and sealed to him (her) in holy baptism.

Therefore, we as the elders of the church of God in this place, assembled in the name and authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, declare before you all that for these reasons we hereby excommunicate __________ from the church of the Lord and that, as long as he (she) persists obstinately and impenitently in his (her) sins, he (she) is excluded from the fellowship of Christ and all the spiritual blessings and benefits which God promises to and bestows upon his church; and that he (she) is therefore to be accounted by you as a Gentile and an outcast, according to the command of Christ, who says that whatever his ministers shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.¹

Further we exhort you, beloved Christians, not to associate with him (her), that he (she) may be ashamed. Do not look on him (her) as an enemy but warn him (her) as a brother (sister).²

In the meantime, take care lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, departing from the living God.³ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” — which is the first commandment with a promise — “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:1-4). Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older (1 Pet 5:5).

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful men, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever (1 Jn 2:15-17).

But since it is God who works in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure,⁴ let us call upon his holy name with confession of our sins.

Prayer

Righteous God and merciful Father, before your holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from your presence because of our many transgressions.

¹ Mt 18:17,18; ² 2 Thess 3:14,15; ³ Heb 3:12; ⁴ Phil 2:13.
EXCOMMUNICATION

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ’s sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by your Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve you more and more. Grant that we may shun pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from you.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to you, for you have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, your people, will always welcome those who return to you. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to you.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way your holy name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen)

FORM FOR THE EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

First Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory informs you with sorrow, that a brother (sister) of the congregation has become guilty of sin against the... commandment. In spite of several earnest admonitions, there is no evidence of repentance. Therefore the consistory had to suspend him (her) from the communion of the table of the Lord. However, this did not lead to repentance. Continuing admonitions also proved fruitless. To its great sorrow the consistory is now obliged to exercise further discipline, and will have to proceed to the excommunication of this brother (sister) if he (she) persists in his (her) sin.

We make this known to you for the first time, and seriously exhort you to pray the Lord that he may bring this member of the body to repentance.

Second Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:

With sorrow the consistory has informed you previously that a brother (sister) has become guilty of sin against the... commandment. You then heard that he (she) was suspended from the holy supper because he (she) refused to repent. In spite of continued discipline no true repentance has become apparent. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. The only result was a further hardening of heart. We have asked the advice of classis and now inform you with sorrow that we will proceed with the excommunication. We seriously exhort you to admonish this sinner continually in love. His (Her) name and address are _____________. Pray the Lord that he may bring this brother (sister) to repentance, that this sin may be banned
Third Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:

The consistory had the sad duty to inform you already twice that brother (sister) ______________ has become guilty of sinning against the … commandment. You also heard that he (she) refused to repent and further hardened his (her) heart, so that he (she) had to be suspended from the holy supper. Yet, no true repentance was shown. On the contrary, all admonitions remained fruitless. Therefore, to our great sorrow, we now inform you for the third time that we have to deal further with this brother (sister). If he (she) does not come to repentance, he (she) will be excluded from the communion of the church of Christ on … For the last time we call upon you to admonish him (her) most urgently and in love. Pray the Lord that it may please him to lead this brother (sister) to repentance, so that he (she) may not harden himself (herself) to the utmost.

The Excommunication

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has informed you that brother (sister) ______________ has persisted in a life of sin. The purpose of these announcements was that by your prayers and admonitions he (she) might turn to the living God and thus be delivered from the power of Satan, who has taken him (her) captive. But, to our deep sorrow, no one has informed us of the least evidence of true repentance, although he (she) was warned by many. His (her) guilt, which was already serious, has only become all the heavier because of his (her) persistence in sin. We have shown much patience with him (her), but now we know ourselves bound to proceed to the ultimate remedy given us by the Lord in his Word, namely, exclusion from the communion of his church. This excommunication is intended to make this brother (sister) ashamed of his (her) sins, and also to ensure that this corrupt member does not affect the whole body which is Christ’s church. Moreover, in this way the blaspheming of God’s name is prevented. Christ Jesus has assigned the exercise of discipline to his office-bearers with the words, I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Mt 18:18).

Therefore we, as the elders of the church of God in this place, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ excommunicate ______________ from the church of the Lord, because he (she) obstinately persists in his (her) sin.

He (she) is now excluded from the fellowship of Christ and from his kingdom. He (she) may no longer use the sacraments. He (she) has no part any more in the spiritual blessings and benefits which Christ bestows upon his church. As long as he (she) persists in sin, let him (her) be to you as a Gentile and an outcast.¹

Warning to the Congregation

We exhort you, beloved Christians, not to look on him (her) as an enemy. On the contrary, try to warn him (her) as a brother (sister). But do not associate with him (her), that he (she) may be ashamed and come to repentance.²

This excommunication, beloved, is a warning for us all. Let us fear the Lord and be cautious, for he who thinks he stands must take heed lest he fall.³ Continue in the true fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and also with all upright believers, so that we may obtain eternal salvation.

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¹ Mt 18:17; ² 2 Thess 3:14,15; ³ 1 Cor 10:12.
You have seen in what manner our excommunicated brother (sister) has lost the way: how he (she) began to fall and gradually came to ruin. Learn from this how subtle Satan is in bringing man to destruction, and how he causes him to despise God’s Word and his sacraments.

Therefore, resist evil from the very beginning. Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:1, 2).

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Pet 5:8).

Pray so that you will not fall into temptation (Lk 22:46).

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts (Heb 4:7).

Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Let everyone repent of his sins lest our God humble us again and we have to grieve for another member of the body. Live with one accord in godliness; be our crown and joy in the Lord.

Only the Lord, who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil 2:13), is able to keep us in the way of his commandments.

Let us, therefore, call upon his holy name with confession of our sins.

Prayer

Righteous God and merciful Father, before your holy majesty we accuse ourselves because of our sins. We acknowledge that we have deserved the sorrow and grief caused by the excommunication of our brother (sister). Yes, we all are worthy to be excluded from your presence because of our many transgressions.

But, O Lord, be gracious to us for Christ’s sake. We repent of our sins and ask for forgiveness. Work in us by your Spirit, so that we may endeavour to serve you more and more. Grant that we may shun pollution by the world and by those who have strayed from you.

Grant that the excluded member may become ashamed of his (her) sins and return to you, for you have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Therefore we, your people, will always welcome those who return to you. Kindle in our hearts love and zeal that, by our admonitions as well as by our example, this excommunicated brother (sister) and others who live in unbelief may be brought back to you.

Bless our endeavours, that we may have reason to rejoice again over him (her) for whom we now must mourn, so that in this way your holy name be praised, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . through our Lord Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen)
FORM FOR READMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Announcement

Beloved in the Lord:

In the year . . . brother (sister) __________, was excommunicated from the church of Christ. The consistory may now inform you with gratitude that this remedy has borne fruit. The Lord has blessed our admonitions and prayers, so that __________ has repented and has requested to be received again into the communion of the church.

It is the gracious will of God that we receive penitents in sinners with joy.

Since all things have to be done in good order, we inform you that at the next celebration of the holy supper we shall loose this man (woman) from the bond of excommunication and readmit him (her) to the fellowship of the saints.

If any of you should have valid reason against such readmission, he should give notice to the consistory within . . . week(s). Meanwhile let us thank the Lord, who has shown favour to this lost sheep, and let us beseech him to perfect his work of conversion to eternal salvation.

(If no lawful objection has been brought forward, the readmission shall take place with the following form.)

Readmission According to the Scriptures

Beloved Christians:

We have recently informed you of the conversion of __________, to the end that, with your approbation, he (she) might be received again into the church of God. No one has brought forward any objection against this readmission, and therefore we will now receive him (her) again into the communion of saints.

The Lord Christ instructed his church to excommunicate impenitent sinners and said, Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven. But he immediately added, And whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Mt 18:18).

He taught us that excommunication does not take away all hope of salvation. For God has sworn by himself, saying, As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live (Ezek 33:11). Therefore the church keeps hoping and praying for the repentance and return of the lost sinner, always eager to receive the penitent. The apostle Paul commanded the congregation at Corinth to forgive and comfort the brother who had been reproved and had come to repentance. He exhorted them to reaffirm their love for him lest he should be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

Christ also teaches us that the sentence of absolution, passed upon a repentant sinner according to the Word of God, is counted binding by the Lord. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Mt 16:19). For this reason no one who truly repents needs to doubt in the least that he is certainly received by God in grace, as Christ has declared, saying: If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven (Jn 20:23).

Questions

Before we proceed to the act of loosing the bond of excommunication and readmit you, __________, to the church of Christ, we request you to answer the following questions.

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1 Cor 14:40; 2 Cor 2:5-7.
__________, do you declare with all your heart, here before God and his church, that you are sincerely sorry for the sin and stubbornness on account of which you were justly excluded from the church? Do you also truly believe that God has forgiven all your sins for the sake of Christ’s blood and now receives you in grace?

Do you, therefore, desire to be readmitted to the church of Christ and do you promise, by the grace of the Lord, to live from now on in all godliness according to the Word of God?

Answer

I do.

Readmission

Assembled in the name and authority of Christ Jesus, we as the elders of the church of God in this place, absolve you, __________, from the bond of excommunication. We receive you again into the church of the Lord with joy and gratitude, and declare that you share in the fellowship of Christ, of the holy sacraments, and of all spiritual gifts and blessings of our Saviour which God promises to and bestows upon his church. May the eternal God preserve you in this grace to the end, through his only Son Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it (1 Thess 5:24). Amen.

Charge

Beloved brother (sister), be assured in your heart that the Lord himself has received you in grace. Be diligent to guard yourself against the subtleties of Satan, the wickedness of the world, and the fallacies of the flesh, lest you again become entangled in sin. The love of Christ has brought you back; love him, for he has forgiven you much. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit again, who has promised in your baptism to dwell in you and to sanctify you to be a member of Christ.

Beloved Christians, receive this brother (sister) in love. Rejoice and be thankful, for this brother (sister) was dead and is alive; he (she) was lost and is found. Rejoice with the angels, for Christ said, I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who do not need to repent (Lk 15:7). Look on him (her) no longer as a stranger but as a fellow citizen with the saints and a member of the household of God.

Since there is no good in ourselves, let us, with praise and thanksgiving, implore the Lord Almighty for his grace.

Prayer

Gracious God and Father, we thank and praise you through Jesus Christ that you have granted this brother (sister) godly grief and repentance unto life and have caused us to rejoice in this.

We pray, show him (her) your grace, that he (she) may become more and more assured of the complete remission of all sins, and may derive from that assurance unspeakable joy and delight to serve you.

Since for a time he (she) has grieved many by his (her) sins, grant that he (she) now may edify many by his (her) conversion. Grant that he (she) may walk steadfastly in your ways till the end.

Teach us, Father, by this example that with you there is forgiveness, that you may be praised. Grant that we now with our brother (sister) may together serve you with childlike fear and obedience all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit is the one only true God. Amen.

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3 Lk 15:32; 4 Eph 2:19.
Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the name of our brother __________, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination to the ministry of the Word (or: installation as minister in this church). Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the name of the Lord proceed to his ordination (or: installation).

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of ministers of the Word.

Institution by Christ

The exalted Christ gathers his church through his Word and Spirit, and in his grace uses the ministry of man. The apostle Paul indicates this when he says, *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teacher, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up* (Eph 4:11, 12). As the Chief Shepherd, who unceasingly cares for his flock,¹ he appoints shepherds to take heed to the flock in his name. They are to take care of the sheep of Christ by means of the proclamation of the Word, by the administration of the sacraments, and by prayers and pastoral supervision. In this way the flock is tended and led in the right paths.

In the early Christian church this task was fulfilled by the apostles.² They, in turn, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, appointed elders in every church. According to 1 Timothy 5:17 there were elders who ruled the congregation. Some of them were also called to labour in preaching and teaching. The latter are now called ministers of the Word. They have received the ministry of reconciliation, of which Paul speaks, saying, *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God* (2 Cor 5:18-20).

Duties of the Minister

The task of the minister of the Word can be described as follows:

First, he must declare the whole counsel of God³ to his congregation, proclaiming the Word according to the command of

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the apostle Paul: *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage — with great patience and careful instruction* (2 Tim 4:1, 2). After the example of the apostle he is to perform this duty in public and from house to house.⁴ He shall expose all errors and heresies as unfruitful works of darkness, and exhort the membership to walk as children of the light. He shall teach the Word of God to the youth of the church and to others whom God calls, for the Holy Scriptures are able to instruct them for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.⁵ It is also his duty to visit the members of the congregation and to comfort the sick and sorrowing. Thus comforting and admonishing, he shall call the whole congregation to the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Second, he is called to administer the sacraments, because Christ has joined this administration to the preaching of the gospel. It is therefore the duty of the minister of the Word to administer holy baptism according to the command of Christ, *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Mt 28:19). He also is to administer the holy supper as instituted by Christ when he said, *Do this in remembrance of me* (1 Cor 11:24).

Third, it is his duty as pastor and teacher of the congregation to call upon the name of the Lord in public worship, *with requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving* (1 Tim 2:1, 2).

Fourth, it is the duty of the minister of the Word, with the elders as stewards of the house of God, to see to it that in the congregation all things are done in peace and good order.⁶ Together they shall supervise the doctrine and life of the membership, as the apostle Peter said: *Be shepherds of God’s flock, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock* (1 Pet 5:2, 3). In so doing they are to shut and open the kingdom of God by Christian discipline, according to the charge given them by Christ. From all this we see what glorious work the ministers of the Word may perform. When the Chief Shepherd is manifested they as faithful servants will obtain the unfading crown of glory.⁷

**Ordination (or: Installation)**

Beloved brother ____________, you are now about to enter upon your office. We ask you to answer the following questions before God and his holy church.

First, do you feel in your heart that God himself, through his congregation, has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you believe the Old and the New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

**Answer**

I do.

**Laying on of Hands***

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with his Spirit and so govern you in

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⁴ Acts 20:20; ⁵ 2 Tim 3:15; ⁶ 1 Cor 14:33; ⁷ 1 Pet 5:4.
your ministry that you may fulfil it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of his name and the expansion of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Charge to the Minister

Beloved brother in Christ, God our Father has obtained the church for himself with the blood of his own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit has made you pastor and teacher of this congregation. Love Christ, feed his lambs and tend his sheep, not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be (1 Pet 5:2). Keep watch over yourself; set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Tim 4:12).

Preach the pure doctrine, so that by your preaching and teaching the congregation may be kept in obedience to the Word of God. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2 Tim 2:3). Do not neglect your gift (1 Tim 4:14), with which the Lord has endowed you for this ministry. Devote yourself to your duties with all your strength and with perseverance, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers (1 Tim 4:16).

Charge to the Congregation

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this servant. Receive him with all joy. How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! (Is 52:7). Take heed to receive the Word of God, which you shall hear from him, and accept his words, spoken according to the Holy Scriptures, not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God (1 Thess 2:13).

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you (Heb 13:17).

If you thus receive this servant from the Lord, the peace of God will come upon you, and you will inherit eternal life through Christ. Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will call upon the Almighty God.

Prayer

Merciful Father, it pleases you to gather to yourself out of the whole human race a church chosen to life eternal. We thank you that you gather this church by the ministry of men and that you give this minister of the Word to this congregation. We pray that by your Spirit you will equip him for the ministry to which you have called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may proclaim the mysteries of the gospel with boldness. Grant him wisdom and faithfulness to guide the flock in the right path and to keep them in Christian peace, that by his ministry and under his good leadership your church may be preserved and increased.

Encourage and comfort him by your Spirit, so that he may remain steadfast in troubles and temptations during his ministry, and, finally, with all your faithful servants, may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant that those entrusted to his pastoral care may acknowledge this servant as sent by you. Give that they may receive the instruction and admonition of Christ which this shepherd shall bring to them and that they may joyfully submit to his direction. Grant that through his ministry all may believe in Christ and thus inherit eternal life.

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8 Jn 21:15, 16; 9 Mt 10:12, 13.
Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the name of our brother ________________, to learn if anyone had objections against his ordination as a missionary. Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against his doctrine and life, we will now in the name of the Lord proceed to his ordination (or: installation).

Office

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the office of those ministers of the Word who are set apart for the preaching of the gospel to those who are outside.

God, our heavenly Father, in his good pleasure, gathers a church from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He calls them out of the corrupt race of man unto life eternal.

For this purpose God sent his only Son into the world, who came as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, that they may have life and have it abundantly. He calls his sheep not only from Israel but also from all the nations, and leads them to his fold, that there may be one flock, one Shepherd.

In order to gather his church, Christ has sent the Spirit as he promised, saying, When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me (Jn 15:26, 27). The apostles were also witnesses, sent by Christ as he had been sent by the Father; they testified that the Father had sent his Son as the Saviour of the world.

It is the calling of the church, through this testimony of the apostles, to move people to believe in Christ crucified. From the time of the apostles, the Holy Spirit has commanded the church to set men apart for the work to which he has called them.

In order that this command may be fulfilled, the Lord Christ has now given to this congregation a minister of the Word.

Duties of the Missionary

According to the mandate of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, a missionary shall first of all preach the Word of God to those who are without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise. Thus he brings hope to those who have no hope and are without God in the world, that they, being far off, may come near through the blood of Christ.

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. He has entrusted the ministry of reconciliation to men whom he made ambassadors of Christ. Therefore the missionary shall beseech men in the name of Christ to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:19, 20).
ORDINATION

He must hold firm to the reliable Word of God, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to refute those who contradict it.\textsuperscript{10}

Second, he ought to baptize believers and their children into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,\textsuperscript{11} teaching them to observe all that the Lord has commanded his church.

And since the Lord Jesus has commanded his church to proclaim his death until he comes,\textsuperscript{12} he shall also prepare the table of the Lord in the midst of the believers. It shall be his duty to admonish the believers when they sin in doctrine and life and to deny them the use of the sacraments if they do not heed his admonitions, for the apostle Paul warned, \textit{you cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord’s table and the table of demons} (1 Cor 10:21).

Third, as soon as it becomes feasible he shall, in good order, ordain overseers and deacons, according to the charge and example of the apostle Paul,\textsuperscript{13} so that they, as faithful men who are able to teach others also,\textsuperscript{14} may guide the flock of the Lord, which he obtained with the blood of his Son.\textsuperscript{15} He shall, however, not be hasty in the laying on of hands,\textsuperscript{16} according to the warning of Paul to Timothy.

In order that the apostles would be able to fulfill this charge, the Lord Christ, to whom has been given all authority in heaven and on earth, comforted and encouraged them, and in them his whole church, with the promise, \textit{And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age} (Mt 28:20). This promise shall stand until the holy city, the new Jerusalem, has come down out of heaven from God.\textsuperscript{17} Then the promise will be fulfilled that the nations shall walk by its light and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.\textsuperscript{18} Therefore the Lord Christ calls those blessed who wash their robes that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Ordination (or: Installation)}

And now, beloved brother \underline{__________}, you are about to enter upon your office, as it has been described. Therefore you are to answer the following questions before God and his holy church.

First, do you feel in your heart that God himself through his congregation has called you to this holy ministry?

Second, do you receive the Old and the New Testament as the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise faithfully to discharge the duties of your office and to adorn the doctrine of God with a godly life? Do you also promise to do your work under the direction of and in close cooperation with the consistory of this church? Do you promise to submit to the discipline of the church, in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

\textbf{Answer}

I do.

\textbf{Charge to the Missionary}

Beloved brother, go then in the power of the Holy Spirit to the work to which God, through his church, has called you as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not be ashamed, then, of testifying about our Lord\textsuperscript{20} and take your share of suffering for the gospel in the power of God,

\textsuperscript{10} Tit 1:9; \textsuperscript{11} Mt 28:19; \textsuperscript{12} I Cor 11:23, 26; \textsuperscript{13} Acts 14:23, Tit 1:5, 6; \textsuperscript{14} 2 Tim 2:2; \textsuperscript{15} Acts 20:28; \textsuperscript{16} 1 Tim 5:22; \textsuperscript{17} Rev 21:10
\textsuperscript{18} Rev 21:23b, 24; \textsuperscript{19} Rev 22:14; \textsuperscript{20} 2 Tim 1:8, 9.
who saved us and called us with a holy calling. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (1 Pet 5:4).

Laying on of Hands*

God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with his Spirit and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfil it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of his name and the expansion of the kingdom of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Charge to the Congregation

Beloved brothers and sisters, the Lord has granted you this servant. Receive him with all joy. Beseech the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that he may guard him (together with his family) in all his (their) ways. Pray for him, that the Word of the Lord may speed on and triumph, as it did among you.21

Since we of ourselves are not capable of all this, we will call upon the Almighty God.

Prayer

Merciful Father, you are pleased to gather to yourself out of the whole human race a church chosen to life eternal. We thank you that you gather this church by the ministry of man and that you have graciously provided this congregation with a faithful servant who is to labour in the ministry of your Word to those who are outside.

We pray that by your Spirit you will equip him for the ministry to which you have called him. Enlighten his mind that he may understand the Scriptures, and open his mouth that he may boldly proclaim your gospel, so that through his preaching many may come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant him wisdom and perseverance in all difficulties and oppression which may confront him in his ministry. Guard him in all his ways. Grant him your grace that he may remain steadfast to the end and with all your faithful servants may enter into the joy of his Lord.

Grant this congregation (and the cooperating churches) your grace, that they may see what you are doing in this ministry and continually remember your servant in their prayers, in order that they may rejoice in the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Hear us, O merciful Father, through your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*The laying on of hands shall not take place in the case of those who are already in the ministry.

21 2 Thess 3:1.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The consistory has now twice published the names of the brothers who were elected and appointed to the office of elder and deacon in this church, to learn if anyone had objections to their ordination. Since no one has brought forward anything lawful against their doctrine and life, we shall now in the name of the Lord proceed to their ordination.

Let us first hear what Holy Scripture teaches about the offices of elders and deacons.
ORDINATION

Institution

Already in the old dispensation the people of God enjoyed the leadership and guidance of elders.1 The Lord told Moses to gather the elders of Israel together in Egypt2 and to inform them of his promises to deliver them from bondage. While these elders were with Moses in the desert, the Lord told him to select from their midst seventy men to bear the burden of the people with him.3 Together with Moses these elders had authority to command the people.4 At the end of his ministry, Moses gave to all the elders of Israel the law to rule God’s people.5 Once in the promised land, these elders fulfilled their calling in every city.6

In his unceasing care for his flock the Good Shepherd called apostles to be the foundation of his catholic church. The apostles, in turn, appointed elders in every church7 with the cooperation of the congregation. Apostles and elders gathered together to take decisions to which the churches had to submit.8 Paul charged the overseers to take heed to the flock in which the Holy Spirit had made them guardians. Peter admonished the elders to be shepherds of God’s flock that is under their care.9

In his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul addressed the saints together with the overseers and deacons.10 In order that these offices might remain, he also gave his fellow workers detailed instructions for selecting brothers to these offices of overseers and deacons.11

He directed Titus to appoint elders in every town. The New Testament calls these office-bearers not only presbyters or elders but also bishops or overseers as well as shepherds and guardians.

The office of elder is, therefore, one of authority given by Christ. Elders are to fulfil their duties by reminding God’s people of his ordinances and by exercising discipline over the disobedient, by caring for the flock and defending the sheep against the dangers that threaten them.

Mandate of the Elders

As for their mandate, the task of the elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ’s church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life, according to the gospel. For this purpose they shall faithfully visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who behave improperly.12 They shall exercise Christian discipline, according to the command of Christ, against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent.13 They shall watch that the sacraments are not profaned.

Second, being stewards of the house of God,14 they are to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order.15 For this purpose they form, together with the minister of the Word, the consistory of the church. Together they shepherd God’s flock that is under their care.16 They must prevent anyone from serving in the church without having been lawfully called.

Third, it is their duty to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice. They are also charged with the supervision over the doctrine and conduct of these fellow servants. They shall permit no strange teaching, so that in every respect the congregation is edified by the pure doctrine of the gospel. Therefore they must

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1 Es 3:16; 2 Ex 17:5; 3 Num 11:16; 4 Deut 27:1; 5 Deut 31:9, 10; 6 Josh 20:4, Judg 8:16; 7 Acts 14:23; 8 Acts 15:23, 16:4
9 Acts 20:28, 1 Pet 5:2; 10 Phil 1:1; 11 Tit 1:5-9, 1 Tim 3:1-13; 12 1 Thess 2:11, 12, Tit 1:9; 13 Mt 18:17, 18; 14 Tit 1:7;
15 1 Cor 14:40; 16 1 Pet 5:1-4.
watch diligently that no wolves enter the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd. 17

To do their work well as shepherds of God’s flock, the overseers should train themselves in godliness and diligently search the Scriptures, which are profitable in every respect, that the man of God may be equipped for every good work. 18

The Ministry of Mercy

Concerning the ministry of mercy, assigned to the deacons, the Lord impressed upon his people Israel the obligation to show mercy to the needy. 19 God repeatedly commanded that the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow might eat within their towns and be filled. 20 In the old dispensation the needy and suffering were protected and provided for by God’s fatherly love; 21 His ordinances taught the covenant people to imitate that love as beloved children.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who has shown us the Father, 22 came into the world to serve. 23 In his mercy he fed the hungry, healed the sick, and showed compassion to the afflicted. 24 Thus he gave an example, that his church should do likewise. 25 The ministry of mercy, as assigned to the deacons, proceeds, therefore, from this love of our Saviour.

After the example of her Lord, the first Christian congregation took care that no one in her midst suffered want. 26 To each was distributed according to need. 27 Also today the Lord calls on us to show hospitality, generosity, and mercy, so that the weak and needy may share abundantly in the joy of God’s people. No one in the congregation of Christ may live unconforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness, and poverty. 28

For the sake of this service of love, Christ has given deacons to his church. 29 When the apostles realized that they would have to give up preaching the Word of God if they had to devote their full attention to the daily support of the needy, they assigned this duty to seven brothers chosen by the congregation. 30 It is therefore the responsibility of the deacons to see to the good progress of this service of charity in the church. They shall acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties, and exhort the members of Christ’s body to show mercy. They shall gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ’s name, according to need. They are called to encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ’s love. They shall promote with word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord.

In this way God’s children will increase in love to one another and to all men. 31

Ordination

Beloved brothers, you are about to enter upon your respective offices. We request you to answer the following questions before God and his holy church.

First, do you feel in your hearts that God himself, through his congregation, has called you to these offices?

Second, do you believe the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God and the complete doctrine of salvation? Do you reject all doctrines conflicting with it?

Third, do you promise to discharge faithfully the duties of your office and to adorn it with a godly life – you elders in

the government of the church and you deacons in the ministry of mercy? Do you also promise to submit to the discipline of the church in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or life?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do
(to be answered by each personally).

The almighty God and Father grant you his grace, that you may faithfully and fruitfully discharge your offices. Amen.

Charge

You, elders, as good shepherds of Christ’s flock and faithful watchmen over the house of God, be diligent in governing the church, in comforting the distressed, and in admonishing the wayward. Take heed that the congregation abide by the pure doctrine and lead a godly life. Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away (1 Pet 5:2-4).

You, deacons, be faithful and diligent in the gathering of gifts and distribute them cheerfully to those who need assistance, especially to the widows and orphans. Do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith. Support those who are burdened with cares or who are lonely. Give in your ministry of mercy a good example to the congregation of the service to which all are called by Christ Jesus.

Be all with one accord faithful in your offices. Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. If you serve well, you will gain a good standing for yourselves, always have great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, and finally enter into the joy of your Master.

On the other hand, beloved brothers and sisters, receive these men as servants of God.

Respect the overseers who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you (Heb 13:17).

Take care that the deacons have sufficient means to fulfil their ministry. Be good stewards of all that the Lord has entrusted to you. Remember Christ, your example in serving the church of God.

Since we are unable of ourselves to do all this, let us call upon the Lord our God.

Prayer

Lord God and heavenly Father, it pleases you for the edification of your church to ordain overseers and deacons besides the ministers of the Word. We thank you that you give us men who are endowed with your Holy Spirit. Grant them more and more the gifts they need—wisdom, courage, discretion, and mercy—so that each of them may fulfil his office as it is pleasing to you.

Give your grace to both elders and deacons that they may persevere in faithful service, without being hindered by trouble and sorrow or by persecution of the world.

Grant that this congregation, over whom you have set them, may submit willingly to the good exhortation of the

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32 Gal 6:10; 33 1 Tim 3:9; 34 1 Tim 3:13; 35 1 Thess 5:12, 13.
overseers and esteem them in love because of their work.

Give us ardent love for each other. Grant that we may cheerfully provide the deacons with sufficient means, so that the needy may be liberally supplied.

We pray that by the faithful service of everyone the kingdom of your Son may come and your name be glorified, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever.

Amen.

________________________________________

**FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE**

**Announcement**

The consistory announces that ______________ and ______________ have indicated their intention to enter into the married state, according to the ordinance of God. They desire to begin this holy state in the name of the Lord and to complete it to his glory. If no lawful objection is brought forward, the ceremony will take place, the Lord willing, on...

**Introduction**

____________ and ______________, since the consistory has duly made known to the congregation your desire to enter into the married state, and no lawful objection has been presented, we may now proceed to the solemnization of your marriage in the name of the Lord.

**The Institution of Marriage**

Let us first listen to a summary of what the Word of God teaches us about marriage. We find there that marriage is an institution of God which pleases him, and must therefore be held in honour among all.\(^1\) After God our Father made heaven and earth, he created man in his own image.\(^2\) And *the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Gen 2:18-24). We therefore believe that the Lord also today gives husband and wife to one another. Since they are united by his hand, nothing shall separate them in this life.

Also, our Lord Jesus Christ honoured marriage when he revealed his glory at the marriage feast at Cana.\(^3\) He teaches us that marriage is an institution of God and should not be broken, when he says, *Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate* (Mt 19:6).

\(^{1}\) Heb 13:4; \(^{2}\) Gen 1:27; \(^{3}\) Jn 2:1-11.
Since God has made marriage such a strong bond, he hates divorce, as also our Lord Jesus Christ shows in these words: *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery* (Mt 19:9).

As the Lord forbids immorality *each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband* (1 Cor 7:2), so that our bodies may be preserved as temples of the Holy Spirit and we may glorify God in our bodies.

**The Profound Mystery**

The apostle Paul teaches us that the unity of husband and wife in marriage is a profound mystery, reflecting the relationship between Christ and his church. As Christ is the Head of the church, so the husband is the head of his wife. Christ loved his church to the end, and gave himself up for her, that she might be holy and without blemish; likewise the husband shall love his wife as his own body, take care of her, and cherish her. As the church is subject to Christ, so the wife shall be subject in everything to her husband, respect him, and entrust herself to his loving care, following the example of godly women who trusted in God and were subject to their husbands.

Husband and wife shall assist each other in all good things, heartily forgiving one another their sins and shortcomings. United in love, they will more and more reflect in their marriage the unity of Christ and his church.

Although it is true, as the apostle says, that those who marry will face trouble in this state and because of sin will experience many difficulties and afflictions, yet they may also believe the promise of God that they, as heirs of the grace of life, will always receive his aid and protection, even when they least expect it.

**The Purpose of Marriage**

The Word of God also teaches us about the purpose of marriage.

First, husband and wife shall live together in sincere love and holiness, helping each other faithfully in all things that belong to this life and to the life to come.

Second, by marriage the human race is to be continued and increased, and, under the blessing of God, husband and wife will be fruitful and increase in number. If it please God to give them children, they shall nurture these children in the true knowledge and fear of the Lord.

(The minister shall ask them to rise.)

**The Duties of Marriage**

Bridegroom and bride, hear from the Word of God what the Lord requires of you in marriage.

Bridegroom, know that God has set you to be the head of your wife. You shall love her as your own body, as Christ loved his church and gave himself up for her. Guide, protect, and comfort your wife. Live with her wisely and honour her, because she is an heir to eternal life together with you; then your prayers will not be hindered. Work faithfully in your daily calling, that you may support your family and also help those in need.

Bride, you shall love your husband and be subject to him, as the church is subject to Christ. Accept his guidance and assist him in all good things. Take proper care of your family and household, and live modestly, in faith, love, and holiness.

Assist each other always and be faithful to each other. Diligently fulfil the calling which the Lord has given you in the church and in this world. Believe God’s

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sure promise, "Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours" (Psalm 128:1, 2).

you have now heard what the Lord requires of you and what he has promised you. May our gracious God give you the strength and the faithfulness to live together as husband and wife in this manner and may your help be in the name of the LORD who made heaven and earth.\(^\text{13}\)

(Minister: Will you now join right hands?)

**The Marriage Vows**

(To the bridegroom:)

______________, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful wife ______________, here present? Do you promise to love and guide her faithfully, to maintain her, and to live with her in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake her, but to be true to her always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live?

What is your answer?

**Answer**

I do.

(To the bride:)

______________, do you declare here before the Lord and these witnesses that you take as your lawful husband ______________, here present? Do you promise to love and obey him, to assist him, and to live with him in holiness, according to the holy gospel? Do you also promise never to forsake him, but to be true to him always, in good days and bad, in riches and poverty, in health and sickness, for as long as you both shall live?

What is your answer?

**Answer**

I do.

**Pronouncement**

(Minister:) I now pronounce you husband and wife. The Father of all mercies, who by his grace called you to this holy state of marriage, bind you together in true love and faithfulness, and grant you his blessing. Amen.

Bridegroom and bride, since we cannot expect anything from ourselves, you shall kneel before the Lord and we shall pray with you and for you that he may enable you to fulfil your vows and grant you his blessing.

**Intercession**

Almighty and heavenly Father, you have said from the beginning that man should not be alone. We thank and praise you that you have given this brother and sister to each other in marriage, that they may be one.

We pray you, grant them your Holy Spirit that they may live together according to your will in true faith. Help them to resist the power of sin, and to live in holiness before you. Lift up your countenance upon them, and guide them in prosperity and adversity by your fatherly hand. Grant them your blessing according to the covenant promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. If it should please you to give them children, confirm your covenant to them and to their seed; and grant that they may nurture

\(^{13}\) Ps 124:8.
MARRIAGE

these children in the fear of the Lord, to the glory of your name, and to the edification of the church.

Let them live in communion with your Son Jesus Christ, in the harmony of true love, and to the benefit of their neighbour. Cause them to look forward with all the church to the great day of the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Hear us, merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, who with you and the Holy Spirit, the only true God, lives and reigns for ever, Amen.

(Or add:

_Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
For give us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one,
for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.
Amen)_

**Benediction**

Brother and sister ________________, our Lord God bless you richly and grant you a long and holy life together in all godliness, love, and unity. Amen.
1. A GENERAL CONFESSIO N OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON AND ON DAYS OF FASTING AND PRAYER

O eternal and merciful God and Father, we humble ourselves before your great majesty, for we have frequently and grievously sinned against you. We acknowledge that if you were to enter into judgment with us, we would deserve nothing but temporal and eternal death. We are deeply conscious of the fact that we are conceived and born in sin, and that all manner of evil desires against you and our neighbour fill our hearts. We continually transgress your commandments, failing to do what you have commanded us, and doing that which you have expressly forbidden. We all, like sheep, have gone astray and each of us has turned to his own way. We acknowledge our waywardness, and are heartily sorry for all our sins. We confess that our transgressions are innumerable, and that we have nothing with which to repay our debt. Therefore we are not worthy to be called your children, nor to lift up our eyes to you in heaven.

Nevertheless, O Lord God and gracious Father, we know that you do not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he should turn to you and live. We know that your mercy toward those who turn to you is infinite; and so we take courage to call upon you from the depths of our hearts, trusting in our Mediator Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Have compassion on us and forgive us all our sins for Christ’s sake. Wash us in the pure fountain of his blood, so that we may become clean and white as snow. Cover our nakedness with his righteousness, for the glory of your name. Free our understanding from all blindness, and our hearts from all stubbornness and rebellion.

Open now the mouth of your servant, and fill it with your wisdom and knowledge, that he may boldly proclaim your Word in all its purity. Prepare our hearts to receive it, to understand it, and to preserve it. Inscribe your law, as you have promised, on our hearts, and give us the desire and the strength to walk in the ways of your precepts, to the praise and glory of your name, and to the edification of the church.

All this, gracious Father, we implore in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . )

2. A PRAYER FOR ALL THE NEEDS OF CHRISTENDOM

Almighty and merciful God, we confess that we are unworthy to come before you in prayer. Our consciences accuse us and our sins testify against us. We also know that you are a righteous judge who punishes the sins of those who transgress your commandments.

But you, LORD, have commanded us to call upon you in all our needs and have in mercy promised to listen to our petitions. We realize that this is not because of our merits, for we have none, but because of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you have appointed as our Mediator and Advocate. Therefore we forsake all other help and refuse to take our refuge in anything but your mercy alone.

Heavenly Father, you have showered upon us so many blessings that we are not able to comprehend them, much less to count them. We especially thank you that you have led us to the light of your truth and to the knowledge of your holy gospel. Time and again, however, we
have ungratefully forgotten your benefits, deserted you, and followed the desires of our own hearts. We have not honoured you as we should have. We have grievously sinned against you. If you were to bring us into judgment, we could expect nothing but condemnation and eternal death. But, LORD, look upon the face of your Anointed. Hide your eyes from our sins and remove your wrath through his intercession. Work in us mightily by your Spirit, that he may daily put to death our sinful nature and work the daily renewal of our life.

As it pleases you that we should pray for all mankind, we implore you, bless the spreading of your holy gospel, that it may be proclaimed and received universally so that the whole world may know you. Enlighten the ignorant, strengthen the weak. May everyone by word and deed magnify your holy name. To this end send faithful servants into your harvest and equip them to discharge the duties of their office diligently. Destroy, we pray, all false teachers, fierce wolves and hirelings who seek their own honour and profit rather than the honour of your holy name and the salvation of men.

Graciously preserve and govern your Christian churches throughout the world in the unity of the true faith and in godliness of life, that your kingdom may come day by day. Destroy the kingdom of Satan until the perfection of your kingdom arrive when you shall be all in all.

We pray for the mission among Jews, Muslims, and heathens, who live without hope and without you in the world. Grant your blessing upon the spreading of the gospel among those who still call themselves Christians but have deviated from your truth in doctrine and life.

Remember all Christian instruction and all who are engaged in it. Bless all societies which, in accordance with your holy Word, seek to hallow your name, to further your kingdom, and to fulfil your will. Be with all Christian institutions of mercy and grant those who work there the full measure of your love.

We also pray for the civil government, for our Queen and her house, and for all national, provincial, and local authorities, whom you have set over us. Grant that they may perform their task in such a manner that the rule of the King of kings is acknowledged by them and by their subjects. May they as your servants more and more oppose the kingdom of Satan, which is a kingdom of lawlessness. Grant that under the rule and protection of the governing authorities we may lead a quiet and peaceful life, godly and respectful in every way.

We pray for all your children who suffer persecution for the sake of your name and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Comfort them with your Holy Spirit and deliver them from the hands of their enemies. Do not permit the memory of your name to be removed from the earth. Do not let the enemies of your truth have occasion to dishonour and blaspheme your name. But if it is your will that persecuted Christians by their death bear witness to the truth and glorify your name, comfort them in their sufferings. May they accept their trials as from your fatherly hand and remain faithful in life and death to the honour of your name, to the edification of the church, and to their salvation.

We remember before you all those whom you are chastening with poverty, imprisonment, physical illness, or spiritual distress. May it please you to heal the sick and to restore soundness of mind to the mentally ill. Surround those who are handicapped in body or mind with your care and bless all that is done to help them. Lift up those who are cast down. Be a Comforter to the widowers, a Protector to the widows, a Father to the orphans. Show your love to the lonely, your strength to the weak, your grace to the dy-
ing, your sustaining power to the bereaved. Grant that all trials may yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Glorify yourself in the faith, love, and endurance of all those whom you have called to your eternal glory in Christ.

O LORD, take us and our dear ones into your care and keeping. Watch over our families. Strengthen the expectant mothers and grant them a good delivery. Bless the bond between husbands and wives, and between parents and children. Be with those married couples whom you, in your wisdom, do not give children. Bless them and cause them to be a blessing in the midst of your household.

Help us in our daily work, and protect us when we travel. Bless our work for the promotion of your kingdom and for the benefit of our country, or for the advancement of honourable personal interests. Bless the products of the soil and grant favourable weather and fruitful increase.

Enable us in our respective callings to live according to your will. May we use the talents we have received from your hand in such a way that they may not hinder but rather promote our life in your kingdom. In all temptations strengthen us so that we fight the good fight of the faith, obtain the victory, and hereafter with Christ inherit eternal life.

We pray all this in the name of our faithful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, Our Father. . . .)

3. A PUBLIC CONFESSION OF SINS AND PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON

Heavenly Father, eternal and merciful God, we acknowledge and confess before your divine majesty that we are poor wretched sinners. We were conceived and born in sin and corruption, and are inclined to all manner of evil and incapable by nature of doing any good. We also transgress your holy commandments continually. We grieve you by our sins and bring judgment on ourselves because of them. But, LORD, we are truly sorry for our sins, by which we have provoked you to anger. Our conscience accuses us and we acknowledge that we are to blame for our sinfulness and transgressions. Yet we plead for your mercy on the ground of the suffering of your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Have compassion on us, gracious God and Father, and forgive us our sins for the sake of his death. Grant us also the grace of your Holy Spirit, that he may teach us to confess our sins sincerely and to know our wretchedness. May he so lead us that we die to sin, rise up to a new life, and bring forth fruits of holiness and righteousness acceptable to you through Jesus Christ.

Make us understand your holy Word in accordance with your divine will, so that we may learn to put our trust in you alone and not in any creature. May our old nature with all its evil desires be put to death day by day and may we present ourselves a living sacrifice to you, to the honour of your name and the benefit of our neighbour.

We also implore you, gracious God, to bring back to yourself in true repentance all who depart from your truth, that we all with one accord may serve you through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Or: . . . who taught us to pray, Our Father. . . .)

4. A PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON

We thank you, merciful God and Father, that you have brought us to know you and your Son by your Spirit and Word and have caused your Word to be proclaimed to us. Grant that we, having received Christ Jesus the Lord, may live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith, as we were taught, and
overflowing with thankfulness. But since we, through ignorance, unthankfulness, and discontent, do not obey you as we should, we implore you, O Lord, remember your great mercy and have compassion on us. Teach us truly to know our sins, sincerely to repent, and to amend our life. Strengthen the ministers to preach your holy Word faithfully and steadfastly. Likewise, Lord, give strength to all civil authorities, that they may use the sword entrusted to them in justice and equity.

Keep us, we implore you, from all hypocrisy and unfaithfulness, and frustrate all evil and subtle designs against your Word and your church. O Lord, do not withdraw from us your Word and Spirit, but grant us a strong faith, patience, and steadfastness in all suffering and adversity. Help and sustain your church, and deliver your people from opposition, ridicule, and tyranny. We pray in particular for __________. Strengthen those who are weak and burdened with sorrow. Grant us your peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gave us this sure promise: I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Amen.

(Or: and who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . )

5. A PRAYER BEFORE THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Heavenly Father, your Word is perfect, reviving the soul; your testimony is sure, making wise the simple. Your gospel is the power unto salvation to everyone who believes. We, however, are by nature blind and incapable of doing any good. Therefore we implore you, illumine our darkened minds by your Holy Spirit. Give us a humble heart, free from all conceit and worldly wisdom, which is enmity against you, so that, hearing your Word, we may rightly understand it and let ourselves be governed by it. Confirm us in our catholic and undoubted Christian faith. Graciously bring back those who are leaving your truth, that we all in unity may serve you in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. We ask these things only for the sake of Christ. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . )

6. A PRAYER AFTER THE EXPLANATION OF THE CATECHISM

Gracious God and merciful Father, we thank you that you have established your covenant with the believers and their children. You have not only sealed this by holy baptism, but also show it daily by preparing praise to yourself out of the mouths of children and infants, whereby the wise and prudent of this world are put to shame. You reveal it also by teaching us your ways and will in Christ Jesus our Lord. You gave pastors and teachers to equip the saints for serving you so that the body of Christ may be built up. We implore you to continue to work in the hearts of all the children of the covenant, both old and young, in order that we all may grow in the knowledge of your grace in Christ until we reach complete maturity in him. May we, by your power, not be tossed back and forth by the waves and blown here and there by every wind of teaching. Bless our families and endow the parents by your Spirit with wisdom from above, that they may bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. We pray for all teaching which is based on your holy Word, as we have summarized it in the confessions of the church. Be with all who labour in it and provide them with knowledge and wisdom which is rooted in the fear of your name. Put to shame those who are high and mighty in their own eyes and in the estimation of the world. May by the godliness of your people, the kingdom of
Satan be destroyed and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in all your churches be strengthened, to the glory of your holy name and unto our salvation.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . .)

7. A PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

Almighty God, faithful Father, you have made the world and uphold it by your powerful Word. You provided Israel in the desert with food from on high. Also bless us, your humble servants, and renew our strength by these gifts, which, through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received from your bountiful, fatherly hand. Give that we may use them in moderation. Help us to put them to use in a life devoted to you and your service, for we do acknowledge that you are our Father and the Source of all good things. Grant also that at all times we may long for the lasting food of your Word. May we so be nourished to everlasting life, which you have prepared for us by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. In his name we pray. Amen.

8. THANKSGIVING AFTER MEALS

Lord God, our heavenly Father, we thank you for the food and drink which we have enjoyed in this meal, and for all your gracious gifts, which we continually receive out of your hand. We thank you especially for your divine Word which we were allowed to read together. Through it you have caused us to be born anew to a living hope, which you have revealed in the holy gospel. Merciful God and Father, we pray, let our hearts not be weighed down by the cares of this life nor become too deeply attached to earthly and perishable things. Grant us your grace, that in our daily tasks we may seek the things which are above, expecting our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is coming on the clouds for our deliverance.

We give our thanks and submit our prayer in his name. Amen.

9. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED

Merciful God and Father, you give eternal hope and salvation to the living and eternal life to the dying. You alone have life and death in your hands, and Christ alone has the keys of death and of the grave. All things are in your power so that neither health nor sickness, good nor evil, life nor death can happen to us without your will. We also know that by your power and direction all things must serve our salvation. Gracious Father, we implore you to grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit, that he may teach us truly to know our misery and to bear patiently with your chastisements. If you, O Lord, kept a record of our sins these chastisements should have been ten thousand times more severe. We believe that they are not evidence of your wrath but of your fatherly love towards us, that we might not be condemned with the world.

LORD, strengthen our faith by your Holy Spirit, so that we become more and more united with Christ our Head, since it is your good pleasure to unite us to him in both suffering and glory. Enable us to bear what is brought upon us by your fatherly wisdom. We submit ourselves entirely to your will, whether you leave us on earth or whether you take us home unto yourself. We trust that with body and soul, both in life and in death, we belong to Christ, whose resurrection is the guarantee of our blessed resurrection.

Grant that we may experience the comfort of the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. May his innocent blood wash away the dirt of our sins and may his righteousness cover our unrighteousness in your sight. Arm us with faith and hope, so that we may overcome the assaults of
Satan and not be put to shame by any fear of death. When our eyes grow dim, let your eyes be open toward us. When you take away from us the ability to speak will you then hear the sighing of our hearts. When our hands have lost their strength, continue to support and carry us on your everlasting arms.

Father, we commit our spirit into your hands. Deal with us according to your promise. Never forsake us, but always be with us, even in the hour of death.

Hear and answer us for the sake of Christ, our dear Saviour. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . .)

10. A PRAYER FOR THE SICK AND THE SPIRITUALLY DISTRESSED

Righteous God and merciful Father, you are the Almighty, without whose will nothing occurs in heaven or on earth. Life and death are also in your hand. We are not worthy to call upon you and, if you were to keep a record of our sins we could not hope that you would hear us and answer us. We pray that you will look upon us according to your mercy in Christ Jesus, who carried our sorrows and was pierced for our transgressions. We acknowledge that of ourselves we are incapable of doing any good and are inclined to all evil. Therefore we are justly chastised and disciplined by you and yet we do not nearly receive what we deserve.

Lord, you have made us your people and you are our God. Your mercy, which you have never withheld from those who turn to you, is our only refuge. We pray, therefore, do not hold our sins against us but impute to us the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, so that in him we may stand before you. Graciously grant us recovery, take this suffering and sickness away from us, and bless the means of healing you have provided. If it pleases you to prolong our trial, give us patience and strength to bear it all according to your will. You are wise and good. May whatever you decide serve the renewal of our life.

Lord, rather chastise us here than that we should perish with the world hereafter. Grant that we may forsake the world and crucify our old nature, and that we may more and more be renewed after the image of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us never be separated from your love, but draw us closer to you from day to day. Grant that we with joy may fulfill our calling, which is to die with Christ, to rise with him triumphantly, and to live with him eternally. We believe that you will hear us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Or: Who taught us to pray, Our Father . . . .)

11. A MORNING PRAYER

Merciful Father, we thank you that in your great faithfulness you kept watch over us during this past night. Strengthen and guide us by your Holy Spirit, that we may use this new day and all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness. Grant that we in all our undertakings may always have your glory foremost in our minds. May we always work in such a manner that we expect all results and fruits of our work from your generous hand alone.

We ask that you will graciously forgive all our sins according to your promise, for the sake of the passion and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through your grace we are heartily sorry for all our transgressions. Illumine our hearts, that we may lay aside all works of darkness and as children of light may walk in the light and live a new life in all godliness.

Bless the proclamation of your divine Word here and in the mission fields. Strengthen all faithful labourers in your vineyard.

We pray for those whom you have set over us, that as servants of you, the King
of kings and Lord of lords, they may rule according to the calling you give them. Give endurance to all who are persecuted because of their faith and deliver them from their enemies. Destroy all the works of the devil. Comfort the distressed. Show your mercy and help to all who call upon your holy name in sickness and other trials of life. Deal with us and with all your people according to your grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, who assured us that you will do whatever we ask in his name. Amen.

12. AN EVENING PRAYER

Merciful God, in whom is no darkness at all, we come before you at the end of this day. We thank you that you have given us strength for our daily work, and have guided us safely through this day. Bless what was good in our labour and conduct.

Since you ordained that man should labour during the day and rest at night, we pray you to give us peaceful and undisturbed rest so that we may be able to take up our daily task again. Command your angels to guard us and cause your face to shine upon us. We cast all our anxieties on you, for you take care of us.

Control our sleep and rule our hearts, in order that we may not be defiled in any way but may glorify you even in our nightly rest. Defend and protect us against all assaults of the devil and take us into your divine protection.

We confess that we did not spend this day without grievously sinning against you. In your mercy please cover our sins as you cover the earth in the darkness of the night.

Grant comfort and rest to all who are ill, bowed down with grief, or afflicted with spiritual distress. Your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not abandon the works of your hands.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

13. AN OPENING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Heavenly Father, merciful God, it has pleased you according to your infinite wisdom and lovingkindness to gather a church unto yourself out of the peoples of the earth. Through your Word and Spirit, you govern her through the service of men. You have graciously called us to be office-bearers and have charged us to keep watch over ourselves and all the flock which Christ has bought with his precious blood.

In your name we are now together to deal with matters concerning the edification and welfare of your churches and to do so in an ecclesiastical manner. We realize that we are unworthy and unable of ourselves to think, speak, or accomplish any good. We implore you that your Holy Spirit may govern us in our deliberations and decisions and may lead us into your truth.

Keep all misunderstanding away from us and guard us against the sinful inclinations of our hearts. May your Word be our only rule and standard, so that our work may glorify your name, serve the well-being of your churches, and bring peace to our consciences.

We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep. Amen.

14. A CLOSING PRAYER FOR ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank you that in the gathering and preservation of your church in our country you are pleased to use our services. You have graciously ordered all things so that your gospel can be preached without hindrance and we may engage in public worship and have our ecclesiastical assemblies. At the close of this meeting we humbly ask forgiveness for the shortcomings and sins which did not remain hidden from
your eyes. We bring thanks for the good
we received from your fatherly hand. Will
you, O faithful God and Father, bless all
decisions taken in agreement with your
holy Word. Preserve your church by the
purity of doctrine, by the proper admin-
istration and use of the sacraments, and by
the faithful exercise of church discipline.
Destroy all wicked counsels conceived
against your Word and church, and
strengthen the ministers to preach your
gospel boldly and steadfastly.
Give perseverance to the overseers and
the deacons, that they may be a blessing
to your people through the faithful ad-
ministration of their offices.
Bless our Queen and her house, that
she may reign by your wisdom. So gov-
ern the civil authorities that they may rule
in justice and with wise restraint. May
their rule be directed to your supremacy
as the King of both rulers and subjects.
Let in this way the shameful and wicked
dominion of Satan be increasingly broken
down. Grant that we may lead a quiet and
peaceful life, godly and respectful in
every way.
Hear us, O God and Father, through
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

15. AN OPENING PRAYER
FOR THE
MEETINGS OF THE DEACONS

Merciful God and Father, you have
not only declared that we will always
have the poor with us, but have also com-
manded us to support them in their need.
You have ordained the service of deacons
for your church, in order that the needy
members may receive the necessary sup-
port. You have called us to the office of
dacon in this congregation, and we are
now assembled in your name to deal with
the matters pertaining to our office. We
humbly implore you to dwell among us
with the Spirit of discretion. Grant us his
help, that we may be able to establish
who are the ones that are truly in need.
Lead us to them and help us to distribute
the offerings that have been collected in a
spirit of joy, fidelity, and liberalitv.
Kindle fervent love for the needy in
the hearts of your people, that they may
generously contribute to them as your
stewards. Grant us sufficient means to
bring relief to the needy. May we dis-
charge the duties of our office as Christ’s
ministers of mercy.
Give us your grace to relieve needs by
means of material gifts and to instill the
comfort of your holy Word into the hearts
of the afflicted, that they may put their
trust in you alone. Bless, we pray, our
work of mercy that we all may praise and
thank you, while we await the blessed ap-
pearance of your Son, Jesus Christ, who
became poor for our sakes that he might
enrich us with eternal treasures.
In his name we pray. Amen.
CHURCH ORDER
FORMS OF SUBSCRIPTION
I. INTRODUCTION

ARTICLE 1. Purpose and Division

For the maintenance of good order in the church of Christ it is necessary that there be offices and supervision of doctrine; assemblies; worship, sacraments, and ceremonies; and discipline.

II. OFFICES AND SUPERVISION OF DOCTRINE

ARTICLE 2. The Offices

The offices are those of the minister of the Word, of the elder, and of the deacon.

ARTICLE 3. The Calling to Office

No one shall take any office upon himself without having been lawfully called thereto.

Only male members who have made profession of faith and may be considered to meet the conditions as set forth in Holy Scripture (e.g., in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1) shall be eligible for office.

The election to any office shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation, after preceding prayers, and according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.

The consistory with the deacons shall be free to give the congregation the opportunity beforehand to draw the attention of the consistory to brothers deemed fit for the respective offices.

The consistory with the deacons shall present to the congregation either as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled, or at the most twice
as many, from which number the congregation shall choose as many as are needed.

Those elected shall be appointed by the consistory with the deacons in accordance with the adopted regulations.

Prior to the ordination or installation the names of the appointed brothers shall be publicly announced to the congregation for its approbation on at least two consecutive Sundays.

The ordination or installation shall take place with the use of the relevant forms.

ARTICLE 4. Eligibility for the Ministry

A. ELIGIBILITY

Only those shall be called to the office of minister of the Word who

1. have been declared eligible for call by the churches;
2. are already serving in that capacity in one of the churches; or
3. have been declared eligible in, or are serving in, one of the churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a sister-church relationship.

B. DECLARED ELIGIBLE

Only those shall be declared eligible for call within the churches who

1. have passed a preparatory examination by the classis in which they live, which examination shall not take place unless those presenting themselves for it submit the documents necessary to prove that they are members in good standing of one of the churches and have successfully completed a course of study as required by the churches;
2. have served in churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches do not maintain a sister-church relationship, and have been well tested for a reasonable period of time and examined by the classis in which they live, with due observance of the general ecclesiastical regulations adopted for that purpose; or
3. have been examined according to the rule described in Article 8.

C. CALLING TWICE

The approval of classis shall be required for a second call to the same minister regarding the same vacancy.

D. COUNSELLOR

When a vacant church extends a call, the advice of the counsellor shall be sought.

ARTICLE 5. Ordination and Installation of Ministers of the Word

A. Regarding those who have not served in the ministry before, the following shall be observed:

1. They shall be ordained only after classis has approved the call. Classis shall approve the call

   a. upon satisfactory testimony concerning the soundness of doctrine and conduct of the candidate, signed by the consistory of the church to which he belongs;
   b. upon a peremptory examination of the candidate by classis with satisfactory results. This examination shall take place with the cooperation and concurring advice of deputies of the regional synod.

2. For the ordination they shall show also to the consistory good testimonials concerning their doctrine
ARTICLE 6. Bound to a Church

No one shall serve in the ministry unless he is bound to a certain church, either to be stationed in a certain place, or to be sent out for the gathering of the church from among the heathen or from among those who have become estranged from the gospel, or to be charged with some other special ministerial task.

ARTICLE 7. Recent Converts

No one who has recently come to the confession of the Reformed religion shall be declared eligible for call within the churches unless he has been well tested for a reasonable period of time and has been carefully examined by classis with the cooperation of the deputies of the regional synod.

ARTICLE 8. Exceptional Gifts

Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study shall not be admitted to the ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts of godliness, humility, modesty, good intellect, and discretion, as well as the gift of public speech.

When such persons present themselves for the ministry, classis, after the approval of regional synod, shall examine them in a preparatory examination and allow them to speak an edifying word in the churches of the classis; and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, with observance of the general ecclesiastical regulations adopted for this purpose.

ARTICLE 9. From One Church to Another

A minister, once lawfully called, shall not leave the church to which he is bound to take up the ministry elsewhere without the consent of the consistory with the deacons and the approval of classis.

On the other hand, no church shall receive him unless he has presented a proper certificate of release from the church and the classis where he served, or of the church only, if he remains within the same classis.
ARTICLE 10. Proper Support

The consistory with the deacons, as representing the congregation, shall be bound to provide for the proper support of its minister(s).

ARTICLE 11. Dismissal

If a minister of the Word is judged unfit and incapable of serving the congregation fruitfully and to its edification, without there being any reason for church discipline, the consistory with the deacons shall not dismiss him from his service within the congregation without the approbation of classis and the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, and not without proper arrangements regarding the support of the minister and his family for a reasonable period of time.

If no call is forthcoming in three years, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status by the classis in which he served last.

ARTICLE 12. Bound for Life

Inasmuch as a minister of the Word, once lawfully called, is bound to the service of the church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon another vocation unless it be for exceptional and substantial reasons, of which the consistory with the deacons shall judge, and which shall receive the approval of classis with the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.

ARTICLE 13. Retirement of Ministers

If a minister of the Word retires because of age, or because he is rendered incapable of performing the duties of his office on account of illness or physical or mental disability, he shall retain the honour and title of minister of the Word. He shall also retain his official bond with the church which he served last, and this church shall provide honourably for his support. The same obligation exists towards a minister’s widow and/or dependants.

Retirement of a minister shall take place with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and with the concurring advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod.

ARTICLE 14. Temporary Release

If a minister, because of illness or for other substantial reasons, requests a temporary release from his service to the congregation, he can receive the same only with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and shall at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation.

ARTICLE 15. Preaching in Other Places

No one shall be permitted to preach the Word or to administer the sacraments in another church without the consent of the consistory of that church.

ARTICLE 16. The Office of Ministers of the Word

The specific duties of the office of minister of the Word are thoroughly and sincerely to proclaim to the congregation the Word of the Lord, to administer the sacraments, and publicly to call upon the name of God in behalf of the whole congregation; also to instruct the children of the church in the doctrine of salvation, to visit the members of the congregation in their homes, and to comfort the sick with the Word of God; and further, with the elders, to keep the church of God in good order, to exercise discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord has ordained.
ARTICLE 17. Equality among the Ministers of the Word

Among the ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office and in other matters as far as possible, according to the judgment of the consistory and, if necessary, of classis.

ARTICLE 18. Missionaries

When ministers of the Word are sent out as missionaries, they shall be and remain subject to the Church Order. They shall report and give account of their labours to the church which sent them and shall at all times remain subject to its calling.

It shall be their task, in the specific region assigned to them or chosen by them in consultation with the church that sent them, to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the sacraments to those who have come to the profession of their faith, teaching them to observe all that Christ has commanded his church, and to ordain elders and deacons when this appears feasible, according to the rules given in the Word of God.

ARTICLE 19. Training for the Ministry

The churches shall maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. The task of the professors of theology is to instruct the students of theology in those disciplines which have been entrusted to them, so that the churches may be provided with ministers of the Word who are able to fulfil the duties of their office as these have been described above.

ARTICLE 20. Students of Theology

The churches shall endeavour that there be students of theology, extending financial aid to those who are in need of it.

ARTICLE 21. An Edifying Word

Besides those who have been permitted, according to Article 8, to speak an edifying word, others may be given such consent in accordance with general ecclesiastical regulations, for their own training and in order that they may become known to the congregations.

ARTICLE 22. The Office of Elder

The specific duties of the office of elder are, together with the ministers of the Word, to have supervision over Christ’s church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine and life according to the gospel; and faithfully to visit the members of the congregation in their homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who behave improperly. They shall exercise Christian discipline according to the command of Christ against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent and shall watch that the sacraments are not profaned. Being stewards of the house of God, they are further to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order, and to tend the flock of Christ which is in their charge. Finally, it is the duty of elders to assist the ministers of the Word with good counsel and advice and to supervise their doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE 23. The Office of Deacon

The specific duties of the office of deacon are to see to the good progress of the service of charity in the congregation; to acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties and
exhort the members of Christ’s body to show mercy; and further, to gather and manage the offerings and distribute them in Christ’s name according to need. They shall encourage and comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ’s love, and promote with word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the table of the Lord.

ARTICLE 24. Term of Office

The elders and deacons shall serve two or more years, according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The place of the retiring office-bearers shall be taken by others, unless the consistory with the deacons judges that the circumstances and the benefit of the church render it advisable to have them serve another term, or to extend their term, or to declare them immediately eligible for re-election.

ARTICLE 25. Equality to be Maintained

Among the elders as well as among the deacons equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office, and also, as far as possible, in other matters, of which the consistory shall judge.

ARTICLE 26. Subscription to the Confession

All ministers of the Word, elders, deacons, and professors of theology shall subscribe to the confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches by signing the form(s) adopted for that purpose.

Anyone refusing to subscribe in that manner shall not be ordained or installed in office. Anyone who, being in office, refuses to do so shall, because of that very fact, be immediately suspended from office by the consistory with the deacons, and classis shall not receive him. If he obstinately persists in his refusal, he shall be deposed from office.

ARTICLE 27. False Doctrine

To ward off false doctrines and errors which could enter the congregation and constitute a danger to the purity of its doctrine or conduct, the ministers and elders shall use the means of instruction, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, in the ministry of the Word as well as in Christian teaching and family visiting.

ARTICLE 28. Civil Authorities

As it is the office of the civil authorities to promote in every way the holy ministry, so all office-bearers are in duty bound to impress diligently and sincerely upon the whole congregation the obedience, love, and respect which are due to the civil authorities; they shall set a good example to the whole congregation in this matter, and endeavour by due respect and communication to secure and retain the favour of the authorities towards the church, so that the church of Christ may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

III. THE ASSEMBLIES

ARTICLE 29. The Ecclesiastical Assemblies

Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis, the regional synod, and the general synod.

ARTICLE 30. Ecclesiastical Matters

These assemblies shall deal with no other than ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical manner.
A major assembly shall deal with those matters only which could not be finished in the minor assembly or which belong to its churches in common.

A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor assembly has dealt with it.

ARTICLE 31. Appeals

If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to the major assembly; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

ARTICLE 32. Credentials

Delegates to the major assemblies shall bring with them their credentials, signed by those sending them; they shall have a vote in all matters except those in which either they themselves or their churches are particularly involved.

ARTICLE 33. Proposals

Matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds.

ARTICLE 34. Proceedings

The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin and end with calling upon the name of the Lord.

At the close of major assemblies, censure shall be exercised over those who in the meeting have done something worthy of reproof, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies.

Furthermore, each classis, regional synod, or general synod shall determine the time and place of the next classis, regional synod, or general synod respectively and appoint the convening church for that meeting.

ARTICLE 35. President

In all assemblies there shall be a president whose task it is to present and explain clearly the matters to be dealt with, to ensure that every one observe due order in speaking, to deny the floor to those who argue about minor things or who let themselves be carried away and cannot control their strong emotions, and to discipline those who refuse to listen.

In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly has ended.

ARTICLE 36. Clerk

A clerk shall be appointed whose task it shall be to keep an accurate record of all things worthy to be recorded.

ARTICLE 37. Jurisdiction

The classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the regional synod has over the classis, and the general synod over the regional synod.

ARTICLE 38. Consistory

In all churches there shall be a consistory composed of the ministers of the Word and the elders who, as a rule, shall meet at least once a month. As a rule the ministers of the Word shall preside. If a church is served by more than one minister, they shall preside in turn.

ARTICLE 39. Consistory and the Deacons

Where the number of elders is small, the deacons may be added to the
consistory by local arrangement; this shall invariably be done where the number of elders or the number of deacons is less than three.

ARTICLE 40. Constitution of a Consistory

In places where a consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall be done only with the advice of classis.

ARTICLE 41. Places without a Consistory

Places where as yet no consistory can be constituted shall be assigned by classis to the care of a neighbouring consistory.

ARTICLE 42. Meetings of Deacons

When the deacons meet separately, as a rule once a month, to deal with the matters pertaining to their office, they shall do so with calling upon the name of God. They shall give account of their labours to the consistory.

The ministers shall acquaint themselves with the work of the ministry of mercy and, if need be, may visit these meetings.

ARTICLE 43. Archives

The consistories and the major assemblies shall ensure that proper care is taken of the archives.

ARTICLE 44. Classis

Neighbouring churches shall come together in a classis by delegating, with proper credentials, a minister and an elder, or, if a church has no minister, two elders. Such meetings shall be held at least once every three months, unless the convening church, in consultation with the neighbour-

ing church, concludes that no matters have been sent in by the churches which would warrant the convening of a classis. Cancellation of a classis shall, however, not be permitted to occur twice in succession.

In these meetings the ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside; however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

The president shall ask whether the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, whether the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured, and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church.

The last classis before regional synod shall choose the delegates to that synod.

If two or more ministers are serving a church, those who have not been delegated shall have the right to attend classis in an advisory capacity.

ARTICLE 45. Counsellors

Each vacant church shall request classis to appoint as counsellor the minister it desires as such, to the end that he may assist the consistory in maintaining good order and especially may lend his aid in the matter of the calling of a minister; he shall also sign the letter of call.

ARTICLE 46. Church Visitors

Each year classis shall authorize at least two of the more experienced and able ministers to visit the churches in that year.

It shall be the task of these visitors to inquire whether all things are regulated and done in full harmony with the Word of God, whether the office-
bearers fulfil the duties of their office faithfully as they have promised, and whether the adopted order is being observed and maintained in every respect, in order that they may in good time fraternally admonish those who are found negligent in anything, and that by their good counsel and advice all things may be directed towards the edification and preservation of Christ’s church.

They shall submit a written report of their visits to classis.

ARTICLE 47. Regional Synod

Each year some neighbouring classes shall send delegates to meet in a regional synod. If there are two classes, each classis shall delegate four ministers and four elders. If there are three classes, the number shall be three ministers and three elders. If there are four or more classes, the number shall be two ministers and two elders.

If it appears necessary to convene a regional synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of classis.

The last regional synod before the general synod shall choose delegates to that general synod.

ARTICLE 48. Deputies of Regional Synod

Each regional synod shall appoint deputies who are to assist the classes in all cases provided for in the Church Order, and, upon the request of the classes, in cases of special difficulties.

These deputies shall keep proper record of their actions and submit a written report to regional synod, and, if so required, they shall give account of their actions.

They shall not be discharged from their task before and until regional synod itself discharges them.

ARTICLE 49. General Synod

The general synod shall be held once every three years. Each regional synod shall delegate to this synod six ministers and six elders.

If it appears necessary to convene a general synod before the appointed time, the convening church shall determine the time and place with the advice of regional synod.

ARTICLE 50. Churches Abroad

The relation with churches abroad shall be regulated by general synod. With foreign churches of Reformed confession a sister-church relationship shall be maintained as much as possible. On minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice churches abroad shall not be rejected.

ARTICLE 51. Mission

The churches shall endeavour to fulfil their missionary task.

When churches cooperate in this matter, they shall, as much as possible, observe the division into classes and regional synods.

IV. WORSHIP, SACRAMENTS, AND CEREMONIES

ARTICLE 52. Worship Services

The consistory shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord’s day.

The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God’s Word as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed.
ARTICLE 53. Days of Commemoration
Each year the churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as his outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE 54. Days of Prayer
In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt throughout the churches, a day of prayer may be proclaimed by the churches appointed for that purpose by general synod.

ARTICLE 55. Psalms and Hymns
The metrical Psalms adopted by general synod as well as the hymns approved by general synod shall be sung in the worship services.

ARTICLE 56. Administration of Sacraments
The sacraments shall be administered only under the authority of the consistory, in a public worship service, by a minister of the Word, with the use of the adopted forms.

ARTICLE 57. Baptism
The consistory shall ensure that the covenant of God is sealed by baptism to the children of believers as soon as feasible.

ARTICLE 58. Schools
The consistory shall ensure that the parents, to the best of their ability, have their children attend a school where the instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God as the church has summarized it in her confessions.

ARTICLE 59. Baptism of Adults
Adults who have not been baptized shall be engrafted into the Christian church by holy baptism upon their public profession of faith.

ARTICLE 60. Lord’s Supper
The Lord’s supper shall be celebrated at least once every three months.

ARTICLE 61. Admission to the Lord’s Supper
The consistory shall admit to the Lord’s supper only those who have made public profession of the Reformed faith and lead a godly life. Members of sister-churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning their doctrine and conduct.

ARTICLE 62. Attestations
Communicant members who move to a sister-church shall be given, after previous announcements to the congregation, an attestation regarding their doctrine and conduct, signed on behalf of the consistory by two of its members. In the case of non-communicant members such an attestation shall be sent directly to the consistory of the church concerned.

ARTICLE 63. Marriage
The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman. The consistory shall ensure that the members of the congregation marry only in the Lord, and that the ministers – as authorized by the consistory – solemnize only such marriages as are in accordance with the Word of God. The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private cere-
mony or in a public worship service. The adopted Form for the Solemnization of Marriage shall be used.

ARTICLE 64. Church Records
The consistory shall maintain church records in which the names of the members and the dates of their birth, baptism, public profession of faith, marriage, and departure or death are properly recorded.

ARTICLE 65. Funerals
Funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly.

V. CHRISTIAN DISCIPLINE

ARTICLE 66. Nature and Purpose
Since church discipline is of a spiritual nature and, as one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, has been given to the church to shut and to open that kingdom, the consistory shall ensure that it is used to punish sins against both the purity of doctrine and the piety of conduct, in order to reconcile the sinner with the church and with his neighbour, and to remove all offence out of the church of Christ – which can be done only when the rule given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17 is followed in obedience.

ARTICLE 67. Consistory Involvement
The consistory shall not deal with any matter pertaining to purity of doctrine or piety of life that is reported to it unless it has first ascertained that both private admonitions and admonitions in the presence of one or two witnesses have remained fruitless, or that the sin committed is of a public character.

ARTICLE 68. Excommunication
Anyone who obstinately rejects the admonition by the consistory or who has committed a public sin shall be suspended from the Lord’s supper. If he continues to harden himself in sin, the consistory shall so inform the congregation by means of public announcements, in order that the congregation may be engaged in prayer and admonition, and the excommunication may not take place without its cooperation.

In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned.

In the third public announcement a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner shall take place.

In case a non-communicant member hardens himself in sin, the consistory shall in the same manner inform the congregation by means of public announcements.

In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned and a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner shall take place.

The time between the various announcements shall be determined by the consistory.

ARTICLE 69. Repentance
When someone repents of a public sin or of a sin which had to be reported to
the consistory, the latter shall not accept his confession of sin unless he has shown real amendment.

The consistory shall determine whether the benefit of the congregation requires that this confession of sin shall be made publicly and, in case it is made before the consistory or before two or three office-bearers, whether the congregation shall be informed afterwards.

ARTICLE 70. Readmission
When someone who has been excommunicated repents and desires to be again received into the communion of the church, the congregation shall be informed of his desire in order to see whether there are any lawful objections.

The time between the public announcement and the readmission of the sinner shall be not less than one month.

If no lawful objection is raised, the readmission shall take place with the use of the form for that purpose.

ARTICLE 71. Suspension and Deposition of Office-Bearers
When ministers, elders, or deacons have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, or refuse to heed the admonitions by the consistory with the deacons, they shall be suspended from office by the judgment of their own consistory with the deacons and of the consistory with the deacons of the neighbouring church. When they harden themselves in their sin or when the sin committed is of such a nature that they cannot continue in office, elders or deacons shall be deposed by the judgment of the above-mentioned consistories with the deacons. Classis, with the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, shall judge whether the ministers are to be deposed.

ARTICLE 72. Serious and Gross Sins on the Part of Office-Bearers
As serious and gross sins which are grounds for the suspension or deposition of office-bearers the following are to be mentioned particularly: false doctrine or heresy, public schisms, blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, unjustly enriching oneself, and, further, all sins and serious misdemeanours that rate as ground for excommunication with respect to other members of the church.

ARTICLE 73. Christian Censure
The ministers, elders, and deacons shall mutually exercise Christian censure and shall exhort and kindly admonish one another with regard to the execution of their office.

ARTICLE 74. No Lording It over Others
No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no office-bearer over other office-bearers.

ARTICLE 75. Property of the Churches
All property, both real and personal, which belongs to the churches comprised respectively in classes, regional synods, and general synods in common, shall be held in trust for such churches in equal shares by deputies or trustees appointed for that purpose from time to time by the appropriate classis, regional synod,
or general synod, and such deputies or trustees shall be bound by the terms of their appointment and instruction and are subject to being discharged by a subsequent classis, regional synod, or general synod.

ARTICLE 76. Observance and Revision of the Church Order

These articles, which regard the lawful order of the church, have been adopted with common accord. If the interest of the churches demand such, they may and ought to be changed, augmented, or diminished. However, no consistory, classis, or regional synod shall be permitted to do so, but they shall endeavour diligently to observe the articles of this Church Order as long as they have not been changed by a general synod.
Form to be used in the local congregation:

We, the undersigned, ministers of God’s Word, elders and deacons of the Canadian Reformed Church at ____________, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the consistory, classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.

Form to be used at classis meetings:

We, the undersigned, ministers of God’s Word belonging to Classis ____________, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word of God.

We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute and help prevent such errors.

If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

If at any time the classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to maintain the
unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the penalty of suspension.

However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.
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That word above all earthly powers –  
The busy tribes of flesh and blood  
The church’s one foundation  
The fruit of all his suffering and pain  
The gloomy darkness, sin, and death  
The God and Father of our Lord  
The gospel of salvation  
The heavens with joy received their Lord,  
The vain hope shall not deceive us;  
The inheritance in store for us  
The Lord ascended up on high,  
The Lord is merciful;  
The Lord, my God and Saviour,  
The Lord, so good and great,  
The multitudes of angels  
The name of Jesus calms our fears  
The One who sat upon the throne  
The people who in darkness walked  
The poison of the serpent is their wine,  
The powers of death have done their worst,  
The prophets and apostles praise your deeds  
The rams and goats of Bashan, rich with fat,  
The Spirit came as promised, in God’s  
The Spirit makes our bodies the temple  
The Spirit we as pledge possess  
The Spirit, knowing all our needs,  
The strife is o’er, the battle done;  
The three sad days are quickly sped;  
The weak and weary he revives  
The Word became incarnate  
The Word, the Spirit’s weapon, will bring  
Then let us adore,  
Then let us feast this joyful day  
Then let your refining Spirit  
Then make straight what long was crooked;  
Then the word shall be fulfilled,  
Then with the angel, all at once,  
There are your kingdoms all adore you,  
They did not act as children of the Lord,  
They reached the finish of the course  
They shall mount up with eagles’ wings;  
Thou hast redeemed us with thy blood  
Though Christ was humbled unto death,  
Though fig trees may not blossom  
Though now ascended up on high,  
Though Satan’s wrath beset us path  
Thus, by his suffering Christ achieved  
’Tis written, “For your sake they kill us  
To God all glory, praise, and love  
To him who sits upon the throne,  
To our God be thanks and praise:  
To ruin and disaster are they doomed,  
To save your own appointed  
To thee be power divine ascribed,  
To thee before thy passion  
To you in David’s town today  
Trinity holy, Unity unbroken,  
Under the shadow of thy throne  
Unto God Almighty joyful Zion sings;  
Watch o’er your church, O Lord, in mercy;  
We are flesh and must return  
We are God’s children here and now,  
We bless you day by day, we praise your  
We come, O Christ, to you, true Son,  
We know that if our earthly tent  
We know that when our Lord appears,  
We lift our hearts to Christ on high,  
We look to Jesus even more  
We praise thee and in thee we trust;  
We praise thee, O God, our Redeemer,  
We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;  
We praise you, God the Father, the Creator;  
We praise you, Lord, for Jesus Christ,  
We praise you, Lord, for Jesus Christ;  
We praise you, Lord, that this dear child  
We thank you, Father! You have planted  
We worship thee, God of our fathers,  
We worship you, Lord Christ, our Saviour  
What God did in his Law demand  
What into the earth we sow,  
What is in life and death my only aid,  
What is weak and mortal here,  
When God Most High did parcel out,  
When soon the final trumpet’s heard  
When the needy seek him, he will mercy;  
When the sky is rent asunder  
When the tombs at last break open  
When we cry, “Abba! Father!”  
When we hear the trumpet’s sound  
When with your mighty rivers  
Where high the heavenly temple stands,  
Where thou leadest may they go,  
While shepherds watched their flocks  
Who has believed our message from on high  
Who trusts in God, a strong abode  
Who was God’s Lamb we bless:  
With anxious care or bitter sighing  
With heart and mouth let all confess  
With song and prayer, in faith progressing,  
With voices united our praises we offer;  
With worthless gods they offended me,  
Worthy the Lamb that died;” they cry,  
Worthy the Lamb, for sinners slain,  
Ye servants of God,  
Yet as the Law must be fulfilled  
Yet, she on earth has union  
You are entrained in glory at God’s  
You are the living truth; all wisdom dwells,  
You are the Way to God, your blood our  
You only are true life – to know you is to  
You shall not kill or hate your neighbour;  
You shall not make or serve an idol:  
You, holy Lamb of God, we bless:  
Your glittering spear and arrows  
Your name be hallowed and adored.  
Your neighbour’s goods you shall not covet,  
Yours is the kingdom, yours the might,